

REUNION IN VIENNA

Reunion in Vienna

A Play in Three Acts

by

Robert Emmet Sherwood

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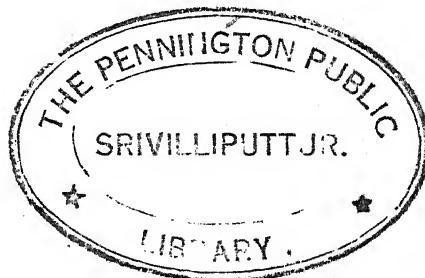
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To
MY WIFE

PREFACE

“**Sartor Resartus**” you will find this passage, presumably applicable when Carlyle wrote it, much more applicable to-day, and perhaps laughably old-fashioned tomorrow :

“Wonder,” says he, “is the basis of Worship : the gn of wonder is perennial, indestructible in Man ; ly at certain stages (as the present) it is, for some ort season, a reign *in partibus infidelium*. That progress Science, which is to destroy Wonder, and in its ad substitute Mensuration and Numeration, finds all favour with Teufelsdröckh, much as he otherwise nerates these two latter processes.”

It is probable that the frozen image of Carlyle, staring the Hovis sign gleaming over Battersea, may be dly astonished at the suggestion that any of his erances should have given to an American writer e impulse to compose a romantic comedy about enna. But the reign of wonder is indestructible, and —for the present, at least—is the desire to escape from ensuration and Numeration. This play, then, is a monstration of the escape mechanism in operation, d it must be regretfully reported that no form of echanism is more popular or in more general use in r obstreperously technological age.

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Which may be regarded as sufficient indication of the spirit of moral defeatism that now prevails in the great, discouraging mass of our contemporary reading matter. It is a spirit, or want of spirit, that can truthfully be said to be new in the world—for the reason that in no previous historic emergency has the common man enjoyed the dubious advantages of consciousness (and self-consciousness). However unwilling, he is now able to realize that his generation has the ill-luck to occupy the limbo-like interlude between one age and another. Looking about him, he sees a shell-torn No Man's Land, filled with barbed-wire entanglements and stench and uncertainty. If it is not actual chaos, it is a convincing counterfeit thereof. Before him is black doubt, punctured by brief flashes of ominous light, whose revelations are not comforting. Behind him is nothing but the ghastly wreckage of burned bridges.

In his desperation, which he assures himself is essentially comic, he casts about for weapons of defence. The old minds offer him Superstition, but it is a stringless bow, impotent in its obsolescence. The new minds offer him Rationalism, but it is a boomerang. He must devise pitiful defences of his own, like a soldier who spreads a sheet of wrapping paper over his bivouac to keep out the airplane bombs. In Europe, this manifests itself in the heroic but anachronistic attempt to recreate the illusions of nationalism; people drugging themselves with the comforting hope that to-morrow will be a repetition of yesterday, that the Cæsars and the Tudors will return.

In America, which has had no Cæsars or Tudors, nor even any Hohenzollerns or Habsburgs, the favourite

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defence against unlovely reality is a kind of
cynicism that is increasingly tremulous,
shrill.

Alternative to cynicism is the sentimentalism
of exquisite anguish from an acknowledgment
Consider the "Hollow Men" in T. S. Eliot's
poems: "shape without form, shade without
analyzed force, gesture without motion." Eliot
was one of the few authorized spokesmen of his time.

*This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.*

another spokesman, a tabloid newspaper,
York Daily News, which gives true statement
of the problem:

is better—to live in fear of kidnappers,
and blackmailers whom the law can't touch,
our remaining liberties of speech and action
security which a strong ruler (Mussolini or
any American mother, at least. She would
trade her remaining American liberties for
the privilege that she could put her baby in its crib
and find it there safe to-morrow morning."

Equality—liberty, equality, fraternity, and the
happiness! Peace and prosperity! Emancipation!
enlightenment! All the distillations of man's
intelligence have gone sour.

First of it is that man had been so full of hope.
complete confidence in the age of reason, the
neutralization of nature, for it was his own

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idea. It differed from all previous ages in this great respect : it was not caused by the movements of glacier, the upheaval or submersion of continents, the imposition of prolonged droughts : it was the product of man, restless thought and tireless industry, planned and developed by him not in collaboration with nature but in implacable opposition to it. The reasonings of such as Roger Bacon, Copernicus, Galileo and Newton started the assault upon ignorance, and it has been carried on by countless thinkers and talkers from Voltaire and Rousseau to Shaw and Wells.

This is the career of the age of reason :

The eighteenth century knew the excitements of conception, culminating in the supreme orgasm of the French Revolution.

The nineteenth century was the period of gestation, marred by occasional symptoms of nausea and hysteria and a few dark forebodings, but generally orderly and complacent.

For the twentieth century have remained the excruciating labour pains and the discovery that the child is a monster ; and as modern man looks upon it, and recalls the assurances of the omniscient obstetricians, he is sore distressed. He wishes that with his eyes he could see not, that with his ears he could not hear. But his senses are remarkably acute.

After Darwin, it all seemed so easy. Huxley preached the gospel, Pasteur peered through his microscope and detected the destroyers, Edison and Freud began to see the light. Science conferred its blessings at a bewilderingly extravagant rate. It was then that Victor Hugo expressed man's ascendant optimism :

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“ Give time for the realization of the acme of social salvation,—gratuitous and compulsory education. How long will it take? A quarter of a century; and then imagine the incalculable sum of intellectual development. . . Look! raise your eyes! the supreme epic is accomplished. The legions of light drive backward the hordes of flame.”

Twenty-five years! But exactly twice that number of years after Hugo’s prophecy the legions of light converged upon Flanders, and the process of dissolution—political, economic and ethical—had begun. Twelve million soldiers died for democracy, and now *The New York Daily News* announces that mothers would rather have their babies safe. But it is doubtful that the mothers or their sons will derive much joy from consideration of the proffered panaceas. Man is a sick animal, and the chief symptom of his malady is embittered distrust of all the physicians who would attempt to heal him.

The discredited vicars of God believe they can be helpful. They say, “ Go back to the faith of your fathers! ”

They might as well say, “ Crawl back into the wombs of your mothers.”

The discredited ideologues of the laboratory believe that they can be helpful. They say, “ Be aware! Be confident! Go forward with firm tread through the entanglements (which are purely psychological), inspired by the assurances of our continued research. If you feel that you suffer from a plethora of science, then the only cure for it is more science.” They even go so far as to suggest that the physicists might mark time for a while, to allow the biologists, psychologists and

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sociologists to catch up. The human organism must be reconstructed so that it will be as fool-proof as the ~~add-in~~ machine.

Man is, for the moment, scornful of the formulæ of the scientists, for he believes that it was they who got him into this mess. To hell with them, and their infallible laws, their experiments noble in motive and disastrous in result, their antiseptic Utopia, their vitamines and their lethal gases, their cosmic rays and their neuroses, all tidily encased in cellophane. To hell with them, says man, but with no relish, for he has been deprived ever of faith in the potency of damnation.

In *The Modern Temper*, Joseph Wood Krutch has spoken as eloquently for his generation as Hugo did for his. He has written : "We went to science in search of light, not merely upon the nature of matter, but upon the nature of man as well, and though that which we have received may be light of a sort, it is not adapted to our eyes and is not anything by which we can see."

Or perhaps it is a light which enables us to see all too clearly the destination of civilization as directed by science. Perhaps at the end of the long, straight road we see the ultimate ant-hill, the triumph of collectivism, with the law of averages strictly, equably enforced. It may well mean fulfilment of the dreams of all the philosophers : the Perfect State.

It is a prospect of unrelieved dreariness. "I could not imagine writing a paragraph about a reformed world," Joseph Hergesheimer has confessed, and he might have added that before man could even live in such a world, he would have to be deprived of the very power to

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Imagine, a sort of intellectual castration resulting in loss of the one attribute which has made survival worth all the required effort and pain.

It is this prospect which provokes the wailing that sounds throughout all the literature of this period, and should provide great amusement for our descendants —provided they *are* our descendants, rather than laboratory products, and also provided our literature lives that long, which is doubtful. It would seem that the only subjects now available for man's contemplation are his disillusionment with the exposed past and his disinclination to accept the stultifying circumstances of the revealed future. The one substitute for the vanished place of religion, the frustrated idealism of democracy, and the demolished security of capitalism, is abject submission of body and mind to the dictatorship of pure theory. There can be no possibility of choice in the latter. Science permits no compromise; a formula is either correct or it is incorrect, and only one scientific formula for the organization of life on earth has as yet been conceived, and it is the skeleton of Marxism. The attempt to mitigate this formula, to soften its impact, to introduce into it loopholes for the admission of some of the more desirable of the old ideas (such as poetry, the luxury of leisure, etc.) is as absurd as the atheistic attempts of the theologians to adapt their dogmas to the exigencies of modernism. When man accepts the principles of collectivism, he accepts a clearly stated, clearly defined trend in evolution, the theoretic outcome of which is inescapable. He is entering in the great army of uniformity, renouncing forever his right to be out of step as he marches with

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all the others into that ideal state in which there is no flaw in the gigantic rhythm of technology, no stalk of wheat too few or too many, no destructive passion, no waste, no fear, no provocation to revolt—the ultimate ant-hill. Man is afraid of communism not because he thinks it will be a failure but because he suspects it might be too complete a success.

So man is giving loud expression to his reluctance to confront the seemingly inevitable. He is desperately cherishing the only remaining manifestation of the individualism which first distinguished him in the animal kingdom: it is the anarchistic impulse, rigorously inhibited but still alive—the impulse to be drunk and disorderly, to smash laws and ikons, to draw a moustache and beard on the Mona Lisa, to be a hurler of bombs and monkey wrenches—the impulse to be an artist and a damned fool. It was this impulse which animated Galileo in the face of Romanism and Lenin in the face of Tsarism, but the disciples of both of them are determined to exterminate it and can undoubtedly do so, with the aid of the disciples of Freud. There is no reason why the successful neutralization of nature cannot be extended to include human nature.

Man has been clinging to the hope that has been his since he was delivered from feudalism—hope that he may live a life which is, in the words of Whitman, “copious, vehement, spiritual, bold.” He is seeing that hope destroyed by instruments of his own devising, and the reverberations of his protest are shaking his earth.

Perhaps this protest is only the last gasp of primitivism. Perhaps man feels that the traditions of his race demand of him a show of spirit before he submerges

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itself in the mass and that, when the little show is over, he will be glad enough to fall meekly into line.

And then again—perhaps he knows that he is doomed, anyway; that he is riding to oblivion in a vehicle of antiquated design. For there is still space, and the infinite mysteries thereof. The most advanced of all the scientists are now considering it, gravely, and they are not optimistic as to the results of their ruminations. One of them, Sir James Jeans, has said :

“ Science knows of no change except the change of growing older, and of no progress except progress to the grave. So far as our present knowledge goes, we are compelled to believe that the whole material universe is an example, on the grand scale, of this. It appears to be passing away like a tale that is told, dissolving into nothingness like a vision. The human race, whose intelligence dates back only a single tick of the astronomical clock, could hardly hope to understand so soon what it all means.”

So there is hope, after all. Man may not have time to complete the process of his own undoing before the unknown forces have combined to burst the bubble of this universe. . . .

Or it may be that there are changes impending of which Science knows nothing. In any event, those who may read this play, or see it performed, may rest assured that it does not provide nor even attempt solution of the mess of problems touched upon in its preface. It is intended solely to inspire relieving, if more profitable, contemplation of people who can resemble of gaiety in lamentably inappropriate instances.

CAST

KATHIE
ERNEST
ELENA
DOCTOR ANTON KRUG
OLD KRUG
ILSE
EMIL
FRAU LUCHER
COUNT VON STAINZ
COUNTESS VON STAINZ
POFFY
A PORTER
ANOTHER PORTER
STRUP
BREDZI
Two WAITERS
Two Bus-Boys
A BELL-BOY
TORLINI
A POLICEMAN
CHEF
RUDOLF MAXIMILLIAN
GISELLA VON KRETT
GENERAL HOETZLER
SOPHIA
KOEPPKIE
TALISZ
A VALET
JANSEI

SCENES

ACT I.—*The drawing-room in the house of Doctor Anton Krug, in Vienna. Late Afternoon.*

ACT II.—*The ante-room of the Imperial Suite, Hotel Lucifer, in Vienna. Early evening.*

ACT III.—*Same as Act I. Late evening.*

(The curtain is lowered during Act III to indicate the passage of several hours.)

Time: August 18th, 1930.

ACT I

ACT I

The scene is the living room in the home of PROFESSOR DOCTOR ANTON KRUG in Vienna. It is late in the afternoon of August 18th, 1930, a date which marks the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of the late Emperor Franz Joseph I.

The room is ultra-modernistic in the style of its decorations and furnishings, but there is conveyed through the colours of the curtains and upholstery a suggestion of old-fashioned warmth.

At the right, downstage, is a double door, leading to a hall and the staircase. In the upstage right angle of the scene is a long window, looking out upon a sea of horse-chestnut trees. At the back of the room, in the centre, a few steps lead up to a little landing; on this open the door leading to FRAU KRUG's boudoir and, to the left of it, the entrance to the hall which leads to the bedrooms.

Upstage left is the door leading to DR. KRUG's offices, and, downstage left, a fire-place.

Before the fire-place is a seat. Slightly to the left of stage-centre is a large couch, the back of which forms a bookcase. Toward the right is a thickly upholstered easy-chair, and two or three chairs that are not so easy. There is a window seat, and between it and the landing at the back is an American radio cabinet.

As the curtain rises, the stage is empty, but from the radio come the sounds of a jazz tune.

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After a moment, the door at the right opens and KAT comes in. She is a stout, competent, middle-aged seru. Behind her comes ERNEST, a venerable, jovial laundry bearing a brimming hamper of clean linen.

KATHIE. Put it down there. (*She indicates couch, then goes up to the radio.*)

ERNEST. Yes, my dear. (*He puts the laundry basket by the sofa.*)

KATHIE (*muttering as she turns off the radio.*) He always goes out and leaves it on when he knows annoys the Herr Doctor. (*She goes up the steps and knocks on the door of FRAU KRUG's room.*) Frau Krug.

ELENA (*from offstage.*) Yes?

KATHIE. The laundry's here. (*She comes down and addresses Ernest in a peremptory tone.*) She wants to count it herself—and heaven help you if there's anything missing.

ERNEST. Not so much as a doily, upon my word (*ELENA comes out of her room, and walks quickly down to the couch. She is thirty-two years old, slim, serene, self-possessed and almost imperceptibly malicious. Unquestionably above reproach as the envied wife of the distinguished DR. KRUG ELENA remains a lively subject for speculative discussion. There is no doubt that she is a lady of fashion—was born so, indeed—though she is now wearing a severely simple apron smock and appearing as a model of brisk, housewifely competence. She smiles amiably at ERNEST.*)

ELENA. Good afternoon, Ernest.

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ERNEST (*bowing.*) Frau Krug! Good afternoon. Warming up a bit, isn't it?

ELENA. Yes—it's lovely. . . . All right, Kathie. I have the list. (*KATHIE starts taking the folded pairs of drawers from the basket, pair by pair, and putting them on the couch. ELENA holds a laundry book and pencil with which she confirms the numbers of items announced by KATHIE.*)

KATHIE. Seven pairs of drawers.

ELENA. Seven. That's right. . . . Here—let me see how they've been done. (*KATHIE hands her a pair, which ELENA unfolds and inspects.*)

ERNEST. Beautifully laundered, Frau Krug, with creamy softness to caress your skin.

ELENA. Not my skin—my husband's.

ERNEST (*bowing.*) Ten thousand pardons.

ELENA. How about the shirts?

KATHIE (*piling them up.*) One—two—three—four—five—six—seven. (*DR. ANTON KRUG has come in from the left. He is a tall, powerful, handsome man of forty-five, bespectacled, correctly dressed in an essentially Teutonic morning coat with striped trousers. His hands are those of a peasant rather than of a deft surgeon, and he is conscious of them. He speaks quietly, but in his deep voice is the resonance of assurance. He knows whereof he speaks.*)

ANTON. Elena. . . . What are you doing? (*He comes close to ELENA.*)

ELENA. Now don't bother me, Anton. How many undershirts?

KATHIE. Two—four—six—seven.

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ELENA. Seven. That's right. (To ANTON) I
counting the laundry. (KATHIE begins to count out socks)

KATHIE. One pair, two—three—four— (She goes on.)

ANTON (smiling.) Forgive me, Elena—but will this great task keep you occupied for very long?

ELENA. No. Why?

ANTON. There are a couple of students of mine out there.

KATHIE (mumbling.) Eleven pairs socks.

ANTON. Would you mind talking to them while they're waiting? I want them to have a good look at you.

ELENA. No, dear, by all means, send them in. Did you say eleven?

KATHIE. Yes, ma'am. Five woollen, six silk.

ELENA. That's right. I'd better not let them see me with all this wash.

ANTON (smiling.) No, it might disillusion them. They imagine you as glamorous, regal.

ELENA (interested.) Ah! Do they?

ANTON. Where they got such ideas, I don't know.

ELENA. Perhaps they're very young? (KATHIE is putting the laundry back into the basket.)

ANTON. They are—young, and painfully earnest. They're badly in need of a few lessons in the cultivation of grace.

ELENA (rising.) This apron isn't very glamorous, either. (Old KRUG ambles in from the right, carrying the

ACT I

vening paper. He is ANTON's father, a gentle old man, an x-cobbler, who doesn't entirely like the way things have been going since Austria was made safe for democracy.)

ANTON. No, I'm reasonably sure you can do better han that.

KRUG. Better than what?

ELENA. If you can keep them waiting a little while shall do better. (*She goes up to the steps at the back.*)

ANTON. Thanks, Elena. I'll deposit them in here. *He goes out at the left.*)

KRUG. Deposit who? What's happening?

ELENA (*at the door to her room.*) Bring the laundry in ere. (*She goes out, leaving the door open.*)

ERNEST. Gladly, Frau Krug. (*He lifts the basket.* KATHIE picks up the folded drawers and shirts from the couch and goes into the room. ERNEST is following her, but ld Krug intercepts him.)

KRUG. Oh, Ernest!

ERNEST (*turning and bowing.*) Herr Krug!

KRUG (*excitedly.*) Have you heard any more bout to-night?

ERNEST (*importantly.*) I have! I was just over at Lucher's Hotel, and they're in a great state about it. They expect upwards of a hundred people!

KRUG (*impressed.*) A hundred! The police aren't oing to stop it, are they?

ERNEST (*with assurance.*) Noooo! Old Frau Lucher as bribed the authorities. (*KATHIE appears in the edroom door.*)

ACT I

KATHIE (*from the landing.*) She told you to come here!

ERNEST. Coming! (*He winks at KRUG, and goes off with his basket. KRUG goes over to the radio, twists the dials, then turns it on. A speech in Russian is coming through. He listens attentively. Anton comes in from the left, followed by the students, EMIL LOIBNER and ILSE HINRICH. EMIL is dark, bespectacled, poorly, carelessly dressed... ILSE might be blondly beautiful if she cared to be. She is eager and ambitious, but a trifle bewildered.*)

ANTON. Right in here, please.

ILSE. I hope we're not disturbing Frau Krug.

ANTON. No, no! She's eager to meet you.

EMIL. She's very kind.

ANTON (*to old KRUG.*) Father! Turn that off!

KRUG. But it's that trial in Moscow.

ANTON. Yes, and you can't understand a word of it. Turn it off!

KRUG (*with dejected resignation.*) Oh, very well. (*He does so.*)

ANTON. This is my father. (*ILSE and EMIL bow and murmur: "Herr Krug—How do you do?"*) Two of my students—Ilse Hinrich and Emil Loibner. (*KRUG mumbles a churlish greeting and ambles up to the window seat whereon he sits to read his paper.*) My wife will be here in a minute. I have one more patient to see before we can begin our work. A dreadful woman! She came all the way from—where is it?—Pennsylvania, to learn about the more elementary facts of life. She's married too, with grown children. (*He laughs.*) What sort

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of husbands do you suppose they have in Pennsylvania that their wives must come all the way to Vienna to learn the facts? (EMIL and ILSE laugh obediently at the Professor's little joke.) Now when my wife comes in I want you both to be very charming—rather than scientific. Do you understand that?

EMIL. You don't need to tell us that, Herr Professor.

ANTON. Of course not. You're already a good psychiatrist. And you too, Ilse.

ILSE. Oh, I don't know anything yet.

ANTON. You stick at it for two or three years and you'll know everything—as Emil does. (He slaps EMIL's shoulder and goes out at the left. *Ill at ease*, ILSE sits down on the edge of the couch. EMIL takes up a defensive position before the fire-place.)

ILSE. What shall we say to her?

EMIL. Well, I imagine we should flatter her. That's the right thing to do.

ILSE. I know—but about what?

EMIL. You ought to know. You're a woman.

KRUG (*unexpectedly*.) Tell her you admire this room.

ILSE. Oh! (They are both startled, having forgotten KRUG.)

KRUG. She likes to be praised about a "decoration. (With a none too approving sweep of

EMIL. Is it—is the decoration her work?

KRUG. Every bit of it. She stood *c* carpenters and painters and told them what to

ACT I

ILSE. It's tremendously effective !

KRUG. Maybe. (*He rises and crosses towards ILSE.*) But as for me—it's—I don't know—I don't *like* it ! It just isn't natural. . . . Do you know what she said when she was having it done ? She said : " We won't have one thing in this house to look as if there ever was a past. We must believe we know nothing of what went on in the world before 1920. We are beginning new," she said. Crazy notions ! (*He chuckles.*) But all the same, she's smart. She can tell you young people some things that are good for you to know. And what's more, she will tell you if you ask her the right . . . (ERNEST comes out of ELENA's room, carrying his empty basket.)

ERNEST. Well, the laundry added up perfectly.

KRUG. Good ! I need a clean shirt.

ILSE (*in an undertone to EMIL.*) I still don't know what to say to her. } (Together)

EMIL. Sh !

ERNEST. And if I hear any more about that certain affair I'll let you know.

KRUG. Oh, please do, Ernest, because if there is a rumpus, they won't let the papers print anything about it. Do you think there will be a rumpus ?

ERNEST (*knowingly.*) Unless I miss my guess, there'll be a good one. . . .

KRUG. Oh, I hope so.

ERNEST. Believe me, they're eager to have Frau Krug there. (KATHIE comes out of ELENA's room.)

KRUG. Oh, I can believe that.

ACT I

KATHIE. Come on, now—we're through with you.
she crosses to the right.)

ERNEST. Yes, my dear.

ILSE (to EMIL.) What was that about Frau Krug ?
EMIL cautions her to silence.)

KRUG. Good afternoon, Ernest.

ERNEST. Good afternoon, Herr Krug. (*He goes to the right, followed by KATHIE.*)

KRUG. Herr Krug ! (*He chuckles as he turns back to the students.*) He and I used to go to school together, and now he calls me "Herr" Krug. That's because he's the father of my son. As if I deserved the credit. (*he comes close to ILSE.*) Do you want to know something ?

ILSE. About Frau Krug ?

KRUG (*paying no attention to her question.*) I never knew what was in my boy. Neither did his mother. We wanted him to follow my trade, shoe-making. But he had big ideas. He had to be a surgeon and a revolutionist. Even when he was wearing short pants he was telling us that science was going to cure everyone of everything. He was the wildest talker.

EMIL. Because he knew the truth.

KRUG. Well—he'd have been better off if he'd kept his mouth closed. They didn't like to be talked out the way he talked. They punished him. . . .

ILSE. Who were they ?

EMIL. The Habsburgs !

ILSE. Oh !

Act I

KRUG. Yes—that's who it was. They were sm—
too. Whenever things became too hot for 'em here
home they'd start another war, and send all the w—
of the trouble makers into the front line. They did t—
with him. They put him to work patching up all
soldiers they'd broken there in Gorizia—patching '—
up so that they could send 'em out to be broken aga—
But do you know what he said about it? He said it w—
murder they were doing—that the enemy were o—
comrades. Comrades! The Italians! And on top
all that, every soldier that was sent to him was mark—
unfit for further military service. He told 'em all to
home. But *they* soon put a stop to that. They to—
away his commission from him, and made him a labour
in their stone quarries; and that's why he could nev—
be a surgeon again. They crushed his hands with the
stones!

ILSE. How horrible!

EMIL (*vehemently.*) That's one of the crimes that w—
must never forget!

KRUG. Oh, it didn't upset him. He said, "If
can't use my hands to chop people to pieces, I can st—
use *this*." (*He taps his head.*) And he did. And no—
they don't put him in prison for what he says. The
pay him! Why—they sent for my boy all the wa—
from America, and he went across the ocean to tell thos
Americans how to live. *They* didn't know. And whe—
he came back he brought me a present—that wireless
machine, there. Did you ever see as fine a one as that?
(*He gazes lovingly at the radio.*) It's mine—but they won'
let me play it.

ACT I

(ELENA comes in, now wearing a graceful tea-gown.)

ILSE. Oh—that's too bad! (EMIL signals to ILSE behold FRAU KRUG.)

EMIL (bowing.) Frau Krug!

ELENA (shaking hands with ILSE, who rises.) How do you do?

ILSE (timorously.) How do you do, Frau Krug?

ELENA. Father—aren't you going to introduce us?

KRUG. I don't know their names. They're students. (He goes over to the right and sits down with his pipe and his newspaper.)

ELENA (to EMIL.) I'm afraid I've kept you waiting.

EMIL (stiffly.) Oh, no. We are the intruders. The Herr Professor's with a patient.

KRUG. It's a lady who came all the way from Pennsylvania with complaints.

EMIL. If I may say so, Frau Krug . . . I . . . well—I . . . (There is an awkward pause.)

ELENA. Why, my dear boy—of course you may say anything.

EMIL. Well, I . . . it was nothing. . . .

ELENA. Oh, come—it must have been something. You're embarrassed.

EMIL (with a sheepish laugh.) I'm afraid so.

KRUG. He was going to say that he doesn't believe you have any complaints, like that woman out there. . .

EMIL. I was going to say nothing of the kind. It was something entirely different—a—a compliment—

Act I

ELENA. Oh—but that would have been the h
compliment of all!

ILSE (*nervously*.) I think, Frau Krug—I think
Emil meant to say that we both admire the imagin
ness of this room.

ELENA. Oh! I should have liked that too.
Now—do sit down and tell me how you are gettin
with your studies. (*They all sit.*)

ILSE. I'm afraid I don't know very much
You see I'm new. Emil is the Professor's favourit

ELENA. Really! What does the Professor t
you?

ILSE. Everything!

ELENA. Oh?

ILSE. I mean, everything that's worth knowin

ELENA. For example?

ILSE (*lamely*.) Well—he makes us understand
if you'll only *think* right, you'll *live* right. I mean
you can make what's in your subconscious come to
surface—then you'll know what it is—and you'll kn
what to do about it.

EMIL (*unable longer to curb his eloquence*.) No, i
It's infinitely more than that. He's gone far beyo
psychoanalysis. He teaches us the gospel of the bet
life—the life that is seen through the eyes of the biologi
microscope and in the changing colours of the chemis
test tube. He teaches us that the forward progress
man must be regulated by the statistician's inexora
curve, and not by the encyclicals of priests or the ukas

ACT I

of kings. He teaches us to banish from the world all
but fear of God—to know Him, and recognize Him only
as a measurable force in cosmic technology. He teaches
us to look into ourselves—our bodies, our minds—and
not to the vague hills of mysticism, for the knowledge
that will set us free.

ELENA. Well—that *does* cover about everything,
doesn't it? (*She treats EMIL to a sympathetic smile.*) And
then you have absorbed all the knowledge there is,
what will you do with it?

EMIL. I shall try to carry it to others—to share
with all mankind.

ELENA. I see. You're to be another Paul.

EMIL. Another Paul?

ELENA. Yes—Paul! The Apostle!

EMIL. Oh—yes.

ELENA (*to ILSE.*) And how about you?

ILSE. I suppose there'll be plenty of work for all
of us.

EMIL (*rising.*) You see, Madam—the world is very
young.

ELENA. Very *young*?

EMIL. Why—hardly more than ten years ago we
were living under conditions of mediævalism.

ELENA. Ten years!

EMIL. When I look at the decaying relics of the old
order, the gaunt, empty palace of the Habsburgs, and
the silly monuments they erected to their own glory—

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I bless the war and the revolution that delivered us from the tyranny of ignorance.

ELENA. And what do you say when you look me?

ILSE. At *you*, Frau Krug? What possible connection has that . . .

ELENA. I'm one of the relics of the middle age of ten years ago. (ANTON comes in from the left.)

EMIL. You are the wife of the most enlightened scientist in Austria.

ANTON. Emil! I overheard that last remark.

EMIL. Yes, sir.

ANTON. I'm afraid you must have misunderstood me. I wanted you to flatter her, not me. (He goes to the bookcase at the back.)

ELENA. They've been charming, both of them.

ANTON (casually looking for a book.) I'm glad to hear it. . . . The one thing these students have difficulty in developing is the correct bedside manner. . . .] that copy of *Sons and Lovers* here?

ELENA. I think it's there—somewhere.

ANTON. I want to give it to that Pennsylvania woman. It might help her. . . . Ah—here it is.

ELENA. What's the trouble with her?

ANTON. The usual one—another frustration! For twenty years she's been measuring her poor husband in terms of her first love—the one that got away. . . .

ELENA. And what are you prescribing, beside that book?

ACT I

ANTON. She must find her first lover, and have a good look at him as he is now. He's a manufacturer of dental supplies. I think she'll be cured. . . . (*He smiles at ELENA and goes out at the left.*)

ELENA. I hope he does help her. It must be awful to be always unsatisfied, and puzzled. . . .

EMIL (*with complete conviction.*) He'll cure her—if she has the capacity to understand.

ELENA. You worship him, don't you?

EMIL. All youth must worship him. He is leading us from the darkness—into the light.

ELENA. Do you hear that, father? Your son is a god.

KRUG. Yes—that's what they say.

ILSE. Frau Krug. . . .

ELENA. Yes, dear.

ILSE (*hesitantly.*) There's a question I'd like to ask. You see—the point is that we, Emil and I—we know only the present, the age of reason since the Revolution. You know something of the past.

EMIL (*reproving her quietly.*) Ilse . . .

ELENA. That's quite all right. Why shouldn't I know the past? I'm old enough to be your mother. (*They both protest.*) Well, practically. . . . Now, come—what was the question that you want to ask?

KRUG. She wants you to tell her what you know of the Habsburgs.

EMIL. Frau Krug—I swear that we pay no attention to the scandalous gossip that evil, malicious bourgeois . . .

ACT I

ELENA (*cutting in.*) Oh, but you should. You want to be psychoanalysts, don't you?

ILSE. Well. . . .

EMIL. Of course, we do!

ELENA. Then there's every reason for you to do research work.

EMIL. Research work is to be done in the laboratory—not in the drawing-room.

ELENA. My dear boy—when you have been fully inoculated with the germ of scientific culture you will realize that all the world is your laboratory—and all the men and women in it merely guinea-pigs. I'm one of them—and I'm here to be explored. As a matter of fact, I'm a peculiarly interesting specimen—ask my husband if I'm not. He'll tell you that most of his vast knowledge of human frailty comes from observation of me. (*To ILSE.*) Now, please! Just what did you want to know?

ILSE. It would be helpful to know how you see all the changes—whether you think we are advanced, for all our knowledge, or . . .

ELENA. Aren't you content to take my husband's word for it that the world has improved?

EMIL. I ask for no other assurance. I need none.

ELENA (*to EMIL.*) I know. But—(*to ILSE*)—I gather that you're not so sure.

ILSE (*tremulous.*) The trouble is—I'm not sure of myself.

ELENA. Oh?

ACT I

ILSE. I—I had an experience.

ELENA. Ah! I see! (*She draws her chair closer to ILSE. KRUG, who has been listening, draws his a bit nearer.*) Tell me about it.

ILSE (*hesitantly.*) It was very strange, and terribly disturbing. I've tried to account for my emotional reaction to it, but I can't do it. I was in Nice on my vacation, and I called a taxi. When I was in it, I happened to look in the little mirror, above the driver's seat, and saw his eyes. He was staring at me, openly, insolently. They were the queerest eyes I've ever seen. I kept looking at them—although I didn't want to. I felt sure I'd seen him before. He was driving frightfully fast—on those narrow roads that run along the brink of cliffs—crazily. That wasn't where I wanted to go at all, but I'd forgotten about that. I thought the cab would go over the edge any minute. Finally, I screamed out to him to stop—but I was so terrified that I forgot to say it in French. And with that he did stop, and stepped from his seat in the front and climbed into the inside of the taxi and sat down beside me. And he said, "I thought so! There was something about your eyelids that identified you as a Viennese. I am Viennese too. In fact, I'm one of those who imparted to Vienna its now defunct glory." Then he put his arms around me and gave me a long kiss.

KRUG (*softly.*) Well—well—

ELENA (*slowly.*) A taxi-driver.

ILSE. He kissed me so that I couldn't seem to utter a word of protest. I tried to tell myself that he was something more than an emotional extravert—but that

ACT I

didn't seem to help me. Then he said: "Permit me to introduce myself: I am the Archduke Rudolf Maximilian von Habsburg."

ELENA (*nodding.*) Yes! (*KRUG laughs boisterously.* ELENA rises.) Father!

(KRUG stifles his mirth.)

EMIL. I don't believe it. It was probably some impostor.

ILSE. No. I asked them at the hotel when I got back. They told me he was well known in Nice.

KRUG. How long was it before you got back?

ILSE. Oh, he took me right back. . . . You see, he'd stopped his cab in the middle of the road, blocking traffic, and some policemen came along, so he had to remember he was a taxi-driver. . . . (*A little sadly.*)

KRUG. Oh, dear.

EMIL (*to ILSE, in an undertone.*) You've said about enough!

ELENA. What did he look like?

ILSE. He looked as if he'd stepped right out of one of those portraits in the old palace.

ELENA. Yes! I know. Those full, rich lips.

ILSE (*in ardent agreement.*) Yes! That's why I thought I'd seen him before. . . . And when I wanted to pay him the fare, he waved it away, and said, "Nonsense, my dear—on this ride, you have been my guest!"

KRUG. I should say you had. (*He laughs.*) Just like him! Isn't it, Elena? Just exactly like all of them.

ACT I

EMIL (*vehemently.*) If I had been there, I should have punched his nose.

ELENA. No—I don't think you would have.

ILSE. Indeed, you wouldn't! It's all very well for you to talk—but if you'd seen him as I did, you wouldn't have been able to say a word except, "Yes, your Imperial Highness!"

ELENA (*to ILSE.*) I gather that you considered the experience not entirely disagreeable.

ILSE. I can't decide what I think about it.

ELENA. Have you consulted Doctor Krug?

ILSE. I haven't had the courage to confess to him how weak I was.

KRUG. You don't have to consult him. . . . Elena—you know more about these things than Anton ever will, with all his experiments. Tell them about that time when the old Emperor caught you and Rudolf Maximilian, posing on the fountain at Schönbrunn, both naked as the day you were born.

ILSE (*gasping.*) Oh—then you *knew* him!

KRUG. *Knew* him! (*He can't contain his merriment.*)

ILSE. Oh—then I've said something awful.

EMIL. Yes!

ELENA. No, my dear. It wasn't awful at all. I enjoyed every word of it. (*ANTON has come in.*)

ELENA. Anton, you should have stayed away for another half hour. I was just about to give your students a lecture.

ANTON. On what subject?

ACT I

ELENA. On the past.

ANTON. Whose?

ELENA. Mine.

ANTON. Then don't let me interrupt. Proceed with it, at once. It's very exciting.

ELENA. No, it isn't. It's very dull. But . . . (*to Ilse*) . . . you were right about one thing—it is instructive. And you also (*to Emil*) were right, in all those eloquent speeches you made about the better life. Oh, Anton, you'd have been proud of him.

ANTON (*smiling*) Go on with your own lecture.

ELENA (*to the students*) It is a better life—and I can say that with authority. I was one of the many evils of the old régime—I and that weird taxi-driver who entertained you in his cab.

ANTON. What is all this?

ELENA. She had an encounter with Rudolf.

ANTON (*startled*) Here in Vienna?

ELENA. No—in Nice.

ANTON (*relieved*) Oh!

ELENA (*to Ilse*) You must tell him all about it. He'll analyze your emotional reactions, as he analyzed mine. I needed his treatment—(*she looks at Anton; there is an exchange of understanding between them*)—a great deal of it. He cured me—and I delivered myself, body and mind, to the new god. (*She puts her hand on Anton's shoulder*.) You need have no doubts as to the legitimacy of that god. You can believe in him, you can worship him, you can follow him to the last statistic!

ACT I

EMIL (*fervently.*) Your words are inspiring, Madam !

ELENA. I intended them to be.

ANTON. Well ! All this is elevating our studies to an alarmingly high plane. (*KATHIE enters from the right, carrying a silver plate on which are several cards.*) However, if you neophytes will step into my office, we'll celebrate high mass.

KATHIE. Some callers, ma'am.

KRUG (*rising.*) Who ? Who is it ? }

ELENA. Just a minute, Kathie. }
Good-bye, Ilse, and don't worry about } (Together)
those emotions. They're not uncommon.

ILSE. I know—that's what worries me. (*KRUG has gone to KATHIE to have a look at the cards on the plate.*)

ELENA. Good-bye, Emil.

EMIL. You remember my name !

ELENA. Yes, that's one good result of my education under the Habsburgs.

KRUG (*excitedly.*) Elena !

ELENA (*not stopping.*) I was trained to remember.
(She beams upon EMIL.)

KRUG. Elena ! It's the Count and Countess von Stainz.

ELENA (*startled.*) Von Stainz ? (She leaves EMIL abruptly to look at the cards.)

KRUG. And Frau Lucher, the old lady herself—and that Povoromo, that guide . . .

ELENA (*to KATHIE.*) They're here ?

Act I

KATHIE. Yes, ma'am.

KRUG. Certainly they're here, and I know wh

KATHIE. They're downstairs in the hall—they l
to see you.

ANTON (*to the students.*) Will you wait in the offic
I'll be with you in a minute. (*ILSE and EMIL go out
the left.*)

KRUG. I can tell you *exactly* what they're after
ANTON. What do they want?

KRUG. They want her to go to that party
Lucher's Hotel!

ANTON. Party! What party?

KRUG. They're having a big celebration! There
going to be a rumpus! (*He is in a high state of glee at th
unexpected development, but no one is paying any attention
him.*)

ELENA (*to ANTON.*) It's the hundredth anniversary
of the birth of that noble monarch, Franz Josef the
First. Frau Lucher thought that it should be fitting
observed.

KRUG. Yes, and she's bribed the police!

ANTON. Well—what about it?

KRUG. They want Elena to go, that's what about
it!

ANTON. Do you want to go, Elena?

ELENA. Anton!

ANTON. What?

ELENA. I don't want to see these people.

ACT I

ANTON. Why not? They're friends of yours, aren't they?

ELENA. They were, a long time ago.

ANTON. Well, then—in that case—I can't see why. . . . (He sees KATHIE.) Wait in the hall, Kathie.

KATHIE. Yes, Herr Doctor. (She goes out at the right and shuts the door.)

KRUG. Why do you want her to wait in the hall?

ANTON. If they're old friends of yours, I can't see any reason why you should refuse them. . . . Unless . . .

ELENA. Unless what?

ANTON. Unless there might be disagreeable associations.

ELENA (with surprising vehemence.) Of course there are disagreeable associations! The Count and Countess von Stainz are dreadful people. They were two of the worst of the court toadies.

ANTON. But what about this Povoromo? He's a harmless and rather pathetic professional guide. There's nothing upsetting about . . .

KRUG. But don't you remember—he was one of the cronies of the Archduke. . . .

ANTON. And Frau Lucher—what's wrong with her?

ELENA. I hate her! I hate the sight of her hotel!

ANTON. Why? . . . Because it was the scene of so many of your youthful indiscretions with him!

ACT I

KRUG. Are you talking about Rudolf Maximillian?

ANTON. That damned name again! *(He crosses to the door at the left.)* Now please, Elena—if you don't want to see them, then don't see them. But don't ask me what to do. I have those students on my hands. I'm very busy. *(He goes out.)*

KRUG. Did you hear what he said about that damned name? He can't seem to get over it. *(ELENA crosses to the right.)*

ELENA. Kathie.

KATHIE. Yes, ma'am.

ELENA. Tell them to come up.

KATHIE. Yes, ma'am.

KRUG *(delighted.)* That's the way, Elena! *(He sits down and makes himself entirely comfortable.)* It'll do you good to talk to 'em. I often think you don't see half enough of your old friends.

ELENA. Go to your room, Father.

KRUG. Why?

ELENA. Because I want you to.

KRUG. But I'd like to have a look at them.

ELENA. Go on! Please.

KRUG *(going.)* Oh, dear! They never let me see anything interesting that goes on in this house. . . . *(He has shuffled out at the upper left.)* *(KATHIE returns, holding open the door.)*

KATHIE. In here, please. *(FRAU LUCHER comes in. She is a formidable old party, absurdly dressed in ancient*

ACT I

*lthes, but imposing. Her voice is gruff, her expression un-
angeably hostile, her manner toward all arrogant and des-
potic. Behind her come the COUNT and COUNTESS VON
FAINZ and POFFY. The COUNT is about fifty-five. On his
gray countenance are the ravages of time, disappointment, and
ink. His courtliness, however, is unimpaired. The Coun-
ess, about fifty, is dowdy and excessively emotional. POFFY
a tragic but gallant ex-officer of the Imperial Army, who is
now engaged in the great work of guiding American tourists
out the Hofburg.)*

ELENA. Tatti! I'm so glad . . .

COUNTESS. Elena! My angel! My beautiful little
angel! (She rushes into an embrace.)

ELENA (to the COUNT, over the COUNTESS's shoulder.)
Hello, Franz, how are you?

COUNT. Not very well, thank you. (POFFY and
LUCHER have hung back, as though dubious of the quality of
our reception.)

ELENA. I'm so sorry. Hello, Poffy.

POFFY (bowing.) Elena!

ELENA. Good afternoon, Frau Lucher.

LUCHER. Good afternoon, Frau Krug.

COUNTESS. But, my darling! Ten years have passed
and you are not one day older. Look at her, Franz!

COUNT. I have been looking at her.

LUCHER. Would you mind if I sat down? (She
s, heavily, on a chair at the left.)

ELENA. No. Everybody sit down.

LUCHER. My feet hurt.

ACT I

COUNTESS. I can't take my eyes off you, my little angel. You're lovely! I'm about to sob!

ELENA. Now don't be embarrassing, Tatti.

LUCHER. Let her sob if it'll make her any happier.

COUNT. Don't mind our gaping at you, Elena. It makes us think that maybe we haven't grown old, either.

ELENA. Where have you been?

COUNTESS. In a ghastly London suburb . . .

COUNT. Upper Tooting, if you must know.

COUNTESS. Breathing in English fog, eating English food . . .

COUNT. And drinking English beer.

LUCHER. That isn't beer!

COUNT. Which reminds me, Elena—my throat is parched.

COUNTESS. Franz!

COUNT. Would it be causing you too much trouble if I . . .

LUCHER. He's asking for a drink. (ELENA *gets up to a table on which are a decanter and some glasses.*)

ELENA. I have some port here—would port do?

COUNT. Admirably!

COUNTESS. I told you you were not to touch it drop!

COUNT. We've had a long train journey and I simply must wash the cinders from my gullet.

COUNTESS. Elena, don't give it to him!

Act I

ELENA. Oh, a little port can't hurt him, Tatti.
(She hands him the glass.)

COUNT. Of course not. Your health, my dear.

LUCHER. Do you mind if I smoke?

ELENA. No, have a cigarette. (LUCHER *has opened her enormous black handbag and extracted therefrom a large silver cigar-case.*)

LUCHER. You needn't bother. (*She takes out a cigar, and bites off the end.*)

ELENA. Still smoking the same brand?

LUCHER. No, those Cubans no longer send the cream of the crop to Vienna. (*POFFY steps forward to light the cigar.*)

COUNTESS. There is nothing the same here. After ten years of exile—to find this. Oh, Elena—if you only knew what we've been through. *I've been a seamstress, my darling. A seamstress!* Making sensible underwear for English frumps. We've gone without lunch for three months in order to save enough to be here. And I give you my word, when we arrived here this morning, and drove through the streets, we wept—we literally *wept*—to see that our beloved Vienna is undergoing its last, gruesome agonies.

ELENA. Those aren't death agonies that you see, Tatti. They're the throes of childbirth. A new life is being created.

COUNTESS. You may well say that. (*She looks about the room.*) The new life seems to have done well for you.

ACT I

ELENA. Yes, it has ! (*There is, perhaps, a suggestion of defiance in this.*)

COUNT (*tactfully.*) And by the way—I hope we're to be presented to your husband.

ELENA. I'm afraid he's rather busy just now.

COUNTESS. What's he like, this doctor of yours?

ELENA. Well—he's brilliant, and charming, and kind . . .

POFFY. And famous ! When I'm guiding American tourists past here, I point with pride—"Residence of the eminent Dr. Krug"—and they're thrilled.

ELENA (*smiling.*) Especially the women.

POFFY. Ah, yes !

LUCHER. Isn't it about time to come to the main subject ? That is—if you all feel that there have been enough polite preliminaries.

ELENA. There's no great hurry.

POFFY. By all means ! Proceed, Lucher !

LUCHER. Well—the main subject is this, in so many words : they want you to change your mind about attending the party this evening. They begged me to come with them, and talk with you on the supposition that I can terrorize anyone into doing anything I ask. Strictly between ourselves, I don't think you'll be missing much if you don't come. By the looks of this gathering, it won't be very . . .

COUNTESS. If that's what you think, then why are you giving this party ?

COUNT. Why have you invited us ?

ACT I

LUCHER. Even I have my sentimental moments, Countess. When I realized that this was the hundredth anniversary, I thought that we might have a revival of the old insanity, for one evening, at my expense. I thought there might be a bit of amusement. However, I've decided that I was over-optimistic . . . so now you know how I feel about all this, Frau Krug, and perhaps you'll be good enough to tell them how *you* feel, and get it over with.

COUNT. You really can't disappoint us, Elena. We've looked forward so to this, and to having you here, laughing, in the way you always laughed.

ELENA. But that's just it, Franz. I couldn't laugh. I'd probably weep.

COUNTESS. Splendid! We'll all weep together, and have a glorious time!

LUCHER. And when you've become sufficiently gloomy, you'll start throwing bottles through windows. I know!

ELENA. Who's to be here?

COUNT. Well—old General Hoetzler is expected . . .

ELENA. Is he?

COUNT. Do you know what he's doing now? He's a train announcer in the railway station at Erfurt.

ELENA. The poor old dear.

COUNTESS. And Talisz is coming. He's a book-keeper, somewhere or other. And then the two Koeppkes—I forget what they do.

LUCHER. They run a lodging house in Zermatt—and I've *heard* . . .

ACT I

ALL. Yes?

LUCHER. Well—never mind.

POFFY. And the beautiful Gisella von Kretz. She's here already.

ELENA. Gisella!

POFFY. She's a governess with a Sicilian family in Palermo.

ELENA. And who else? Is there anyone else?

POFFY. Well—of course there were a good many who wanted to come but they were—lacking in funds.

COUNT. Oh, but more will turn up at the last minute to help us consume Lucher's champagne. It's sure to be the jolliest gathering. . . .

LUCHER. Did I say that champagne would be served?

COUNT. I have never attended a party at the Hotel Lucher without champagne.

POFFY. You're thinking of the days when we paid—and well—for our drinks.

ELENA. Oh, I think Frau Lucher won't be stingy with her champagne. Will you?

COUNT. That's right, Elena. You were the only one who could ever order her about. You and Rudolf (LUCHER *bursts out laughing*.) What in God's name are you roaring at?

LUCHER. I was just thinking of something. (*S. is still emitting gusty, gaseous roars of laughter.*)

POFFY (*to ELENA.*) I gather it was something mild and amusing.

ACT I

LUCHER. Oh, you remember it, Poffy—the night that Rudolf gave her the diamond necklace. You were there.

POFFY. I was indeed.

LUCHER. He came stalking into my café at two o'clock in the morning—cursing at me—cursing at Strup—presenting medals to the bus-boys. He said he had to have a magnum of 1812, a basket of pomegranates, and a diamond necklace for Fräulein Vervesz *—at once!*—or he'd break every bone in my old body. I had to rout Barnowsky the jeweller out of bed to get the diamonds.

COUNT (*laughing*). Served him right, the old bandit.

LUCHER (*to ELENA*). And when I gave His Imperial Highness the necklace, he never said so much as a "Thank you." He merely snatched it, and then threw it into your lap.

ELENA (*to LUCHER*). No, no! That wasn't what he did. He didn't give me the necklace until later, when we were upstairs. He first took hold of my hand and said, "Isn't it about time for a dance?" Then he waltzed me out of the room, and on the way out we bumped into you. (*ANTON comes in.*)

LUCHER. But I burned his neck with my cigar. (*They all laugh—but their mirth congeals when they see ANTON.*
The COUNT and POFFY rise.)

ELENA. Anton, are you finished with the students already?

ANTON. Yes, I dismissed them. I was anxious to meet your friends.

ACT I

ELENA (*surprised.*) Oh. . . . This is my husband.

ANTON. How do you do, Frau Lucher?

ELENA. The Count and Countess von Stainz-Herr Povoromo. (*There are murmured salutations.*)

ANTON. Yes. I know Herr Povoromo.

COUNT. Herr Professor Doctor—permit me to felicitate you upon your wife. She is quite the most gracious, the most sympathetic and the loveliest of ladies.

ANTON (*bowing.*) I am inclined to agree with you.

COUNTESS. Herr Professor—we came to beg Elena, to plead with her, to be with us this evening.

COUNT. It isn't so much a matter of pleading—though we'll do that, too, heaven knows. But we do want to assure her what a delightful occasion . . .

LUCHER (*flatly.*) The fact is that, without Frau Krug, the party will be a disaster.

ANTON (*amiably.*) Well—in that case—I hope she'll go.

COUNTESS. There, Elena, that settles it! Your husband approves.

LUCHER. Perhaps the Herr Professor Doctor will also attend?

ANTON. Oh, that's very kind of you, but I really couldn't. I'm afraid I shouldn't quite belong.

ELENA. I've been afraid I shouldn't belong either. But now I'm beginning to think that it might be great fun.

ACT I

COUNT. Good for you, Elena!

COUNTESS. And good for you. Herr Doctor! You are worthy of her!

COUNT. You're going to make this occasion a memorable one.

LUCHER (*with an air of finality.*) Well, now that that's settled, we can go.

POFFY (*stepping forward, hesitantly.*) Just one minute, Elena.

ELENA. Yes, Poffy.

POFFY. Elena—I—think I know why you're changing your mind.

ELENA. Why?

POFFY. Because you realize this celebration will be nothing more than a gathering of broken-down old outcasts, like myself—with no one to give us animation, no one to give us the illusion of youth . . . but . . . I'm afraid that it may not be quite what you expect. . . .

LUCHER. What are you *talking* about?

POFFY (*deliberately.*) I received a message this afternoon.

ELENA. Yes? (*As though she had expected this.*)

POFFY. I was instructed to say nothing about it to anyone. But I think you should know about it before you go to that party; and you too should know, Herr Professor . . . if I might have a word with you in private . . .

COUNTESS. In private? What on earth . . .

ACT I

POFFY. You'll forgive me . . .

COUNT (*stepping toward POFFY.*) Rudolf?

ELENA. He's to be here?

LUCHER. No!

POFFY. He left Nice yesterday on his way to Vienna

COUNTESS. Rudolf!

COUNT (*exultantly.*) I can't believe it! It's too good to . . .

ANTON. Will they allow him to cross the border?

LUCHER (*emphatically.*) No! They'll never let him in after all the things he's said and done. The official are so stupid that the smaller fry can sneak past them begging your pardon, Count and Countess; but they're not so stupid as to allow the most violent member of the Habsburg faction to get back into Austria.

POFFY. Regardless of all that, Elena—I thought you should know. I ask your pardon, Herr Professor, for having mentioned the subject.

ANTON. Not at all. There's nothing I can say. It's for Elena to decide.

ELENA. I'm not going.

COUNTESS. But, my little angel—what Lucher said is true. He couldn't possibly come into the country . . .

ELENA. I'm not going!

COUNT. You can't change your mind, Elena. We need you. You've always made things go. Have you forgotten all those times when . . .

ACT I

ELENA. Yes. I have forgotten. And my dear old friends, I advise you to forget, too.

COUNTESS. You're asking a great deal of people who have nothing but memories to live on.

ELENA. That's just it! You're trying to live on something that doesn't exist. That's why you're all so degraded and spent. That's why you have to drug yourselves with such infantile pretence as this reunion. Wallowing in sentiment! Weeping into your beer!

COUNTESS. I never hope to hear a more heartless, brutal statement—and from you, Elena, of all people.

ELENA. I know it's brutal—and I feel miserable for having said it, if that's any consolation to you. But it's all true, every word of it. You know it is.

LUCHER. Of course it's true! I only wish you'd said it all to me before I'd let myself in for this nonsense.

COUNTESS. It would have been kinder to have told your servant to deny us admission. . . .

ELENA. Yes.

COUNTESS. To have slammed the door in our faces.

ELENA. You're right, Tatti.

COUNT (*to Poffy.*) Why didn't you have sense enough to obey orders and keep that information to yourself?

ELENA (*interrupting.*) No, don't blame him. It was very good of you to warn me, Poffy. But the warning didn't make the slightest difference. You can see why—and so can you, Lucher. You've been in Vienna all through this. You know how changed everything is.

Act I

POFFY. I know, I know, my dear Elena. We've put you in a horribly unfair position.

COUNTESS. *We're* not doing that! It's not *our* fault that she's turned against her own kind.

POFFY. It's only proof of her good sense.

COUNT. Yes—and look at the results of her good sense! And then look at us, who wouldn't accept the inevitable.

COUNTESS. It's to our everlasting credit that we didn't. (*She goes over to the COUNT, and takes his arm.*)

LUCHER (*rising laboriously.*) I'm not enjoying this discussion. . . . Come on. . . . I must arrange about the flowers for the party. I'm getting them second-hand from Gruen the undertaker. . . . Good-bye, Frau Krug. Step in at the hotel some time for a cup of coffee. (*She goes out at the right.*)

COUNTESS. Good-bye, Elena. I doubt very much that we shall see you again. (*She goes out.*)

COUNT (*with attempted courtesy.*) You see—we start the homeward journey to England to-morrow.

ELENA. Good-bye, Franz.

COUNT. Herr Professor Doctor. (*He bows and goes.*)

POFFY. I'm sorry, Elena—very sorry. . . .

ELENA. Good-bye, Poffy. Come to see us again soon. Perhaps my husband can do. . . .

POFFY. My duties as professional guide occupy much of my time—but perhaps I'll find a brief opportunity. Good-bye, Herr Doctor. Good-bye, Elena. (*He kisses*

ACT I

her hand and goes. For a few moments, ELENA stares angrily at the door through which they have gone.)

ANTON. You did not appear to best advantage in that encounter.

ELENA (*too heatedly.*) What could I have said or done to make those imbeciles understand? They think I could sit there, and joke with them, and drink with them, as though nothing had happened.

ANTON (*gently.*) You said that it might be great fun.

ELENA. Fun! Carousing with the Countess von Stainz? And there'll be others at the party even worse than she is.

ANTON. When I came into this room, you were laughing with them. You were just about to accept their invitation.

ELENA. Why did you come in here at all, if you were so colossally busy? Why didn't you let me get rid of them by myself?

ANTON. I came to the conclusion that you should go to that party.

ELENA. What?

ANTON. There seems to me no reason why you shouldn't. . . .

ELENA (*facing him.*) Are you going to carry on the attack?

ANTON. Attack against what?

ELENA. Against my peace of mind!

ANTON. I thought so.

ACT I

ELENA. Oh ! I suppose you consider that it will be good for me to go there and feel wretched and out of place, merely to assure myself that I'm right. Do I have to go there for that ?

ANTON. Are you entirely sure that you are right ?

ELENA. You can stand there and ask me that ?

ANTON. If you take my advice, Elena, you'll go. You know, you may not be quite the calm, superior being that you fancy yourself.

ELENA (*interrupting.*) Are you prescribing for me, as though I were . . .

ANTON. Yes, that's exactly what I'm doing. The tender spot has been uncovered. Now we can take measures to cure it Elena, as your family physician, as well as your husband, I order you to go to Lucher's to-night, and do the inane things you used to do, and that you still secretly think were gloriously romantic.

ELENA. Anton—I know you've been subjecting me to treatment ever since we were married. But you've at least been subtle about it. Now your methods are a little too obvious to be effective.

ANTON. I've revised my methods because I learned something myself when I saw you with your old friends. You deliver all this fine talk about the old days and the new—the woman who was reborn after the revolution. And now some pitiable spectres appear to you and you can't bear to face them.

ELENA. I can face anything, including your vast overpowering intellect.

Act I

ANTON. There are some things you can't face, my darling, because you can't see them. You're still in a state of emotional bondage. You're tied to those people by a cord that's strong even though it's invisible. You must cut that cord—and here's the chance to do it.

ELENA. When I require your professional services I shall make an appointment and come to your office.

ANTON. The appointment is now! (*They face each other through a moment of angry silence. Then ELENA goes to him.*)

ELENA. Oh, Anton—this is so silly.

ANTON. No, it isn't silly. (*They sit down together on the end of the couch.*)

ELENA. Two grown-up people, shouting at each other . . .

ANTON. Sometimes we have to shout. . . . Elena—there's never been a complete understanding between us. There's been a ghost in our house, an arrogant ghost, blocking the fulfilment of our life together. A thousand different times when I thought that at last we'd achieved the thing that we both want, he has stepped into the room, and laughed at me. (*ELENA glances involuntarily toward the door at the right.*)

ELENA. The beater of that damned name!

ANTON. Yes. . . . When I heard he might be there to-night it was something of a shock. . . . But then I thought of the advice I had given to other patients of mine. . . . You've seen what ten years have done to the Count and Countess von Stainz. Well—see what the same years have done to him. . . . Go to that party,

ACT I

have a good look at him, and then come home and admit that I'm right.

ELENA. You're always right, Anton. That's your only fault.

ANTON (*laughing.*) Yes—I've often worried about that. (*He kisses her hair.*) Now come, my dear, dress yourself up, and try to persuade your old friends that you're still one of them. Sing, dance, flirt—relax! Let yourself go completely! And see what happens.

ELENA. Let myself go. . . . Is that the prescription?

ANTON. Why not? (*Old KRUG bustles in from the upper left.*)

KRUG. Well—I saw them! I had a good look at them from the window—and a more down-at-the-heel lot I never clapped eyes on. Oh, I laughed! I laughed when I thought of the old days when . . .

ANTON. You talk too much. (*He has risen and is going toward the door to his offices.*)

KRUG. Then maybe I can play the wireless?

ANTON. No. (*To ELENA.*) Put on that white dress. You know—the one you got in Paris. You look lovely in that. (*He goes out at the left.*)

KRUG (*mystified.*) He wants you to dress up. What for? Does he want you to go to the party? (*He comes close to her.*)

ELENA. He's a little mixed up. He has me confused with that last patient of his—the one from Pennsylvania.

ACT I

KRUG. I don't understand what you mean, Elena. Has anything gone wrong?

ELENA. No, father. Not yet. . . . Why don't you play the wireless?

KRUG. Now?

ELENA. Yes, dear—I want to hear it.

KRUG. Ah, Elena—you're my friend! (He leans over her. She pats his cheek, tenderly. . . . He then turns, happily, goes up to the radio, and switches it on. It is playing 'The Dollar Princess Waltz.')

KRUG. Listen, Elena. It's the band at the Bristol. They always play the old tunes, for a half hour before supper—to give us old-timers an appetite. . . . It's beautiful, isn't it? (He comes down, toward the right.)

ELENA. No. (Nevertheless, she is swaying ever so lightly in time to the music. Old KRUG watches her, fascinated. . . . At length she rises, crosses to the door at the left, and knocks. KRUG sits down at the right to await developments.)

ELENA (calling.) Anton!

KRUG. Oh, what do you want him for? He'll only make us turn it off. (ANTON appears in the doorway.)

ANTON. What is it?

ELENA. Will you please look in the safe—in my jewel box? There's a necklace there—a diamond necklace.

ANTON. I'll get it. (He goes out.) (Swaying more perceptibly, exuberantly, to the rhythm of "The Dollar Princess," he crosses to the chair where old KRUG is sitting.)

ACT I

KRUG. You didn't mean what you said, about music, did you, Elena? It really *is* beautiful, isn't it

ELENA. Yes, father. Beautiful. (*She extends arms. Gleefully, he jumps up. They waltz together.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

The scene is a private room upstairs in the Hotel Lucher, a stuffy edifice built in the gaslit 'eighties. Although redolent of stale plush, which is suggestive to the Anglo-Saxon mind of Victorianism and therefore of dreary propriety, this venerable tavern retains a winked intimation of Viennese caprice. Its sombre salons can still sparkle with happy imaginings of frivolities which no longer are—and perhaps never were—but which eternally should be.

At right, downstage, is a leather swinging door, leading to the pantries and kitchens. Up stage right and left are two more doors. In the centre, at the back, double doors open upon a bedroom in which is an enormous, canopied bed. Down stage left, double doors open upon a larger room in which the banquet is to be held.

Above the door at the back, which is two or three steps up from the level of the stage, is hung an oval portrait of the late Emperor Franz Josef I. A PORTER, on a step-ladder, is arranging laurel festoons about this portrait. Another PORTER is holding the ladder.

At the left is a gilded couch with plum-coloured brocade upholstery. By it is a small gilded, marble-topped tabouret. At the right is a round table, also marble-topped, behind which, as though enthroned, sits FRAU LUCHER, administering orders to a respectful, palpitant group which includes STRUP, the aged head-waiter, and BREDZI, the band-leader, who is wearing a frogged green coat and is carrying his violin. He has given

ACT II

LUCHER *the programme of selections for the evening and is awaiting her verdict on it. . . . There are also present two lesser WAITERS and two quivering Bus-Boys. A BELL-BOY is posted in the doorway at the left. . . . There are other chairs against the walls and perhaps a few potted palms. From the left, offstage, the small orchestra is playing a brisk march, as vigorously as its meagre equipment and talents will allow.*

LUCHER (*to BREDZI.*) There is too much of the Mozart. . . .

BREDZI. No doubt, Frau Lucher.

LUCHER. No doubt whatever. They will want waltzes, apassionata, until they get drunk, and then they will want more waltzes. Sentimental ninnies! (*She hands the programme back to BREDZI.*) They will want to weep on each others' shoulders. You understand?

BREDZI. Perfectly, ma'am.

LUCHER. Accompaniment for sobs—that's all that's expected of you. (*Her cigar has gone out. A Bus-Boy hastily strikes a match for her. She exhales a cloud of smoke, then turns to STRUP.*) Now, Strup, I'm ready for the wines. (*STRUP hands her the wine card.*)

STRUP (*pridefully.*) I have arranged everything.

LUCHER. Oh, have you! (*She scans the wine card with a practised eye.*) Champagne! Cliquot 1911! You are planning to serve that rabble Cliquot 1911?

STRUP. It's the best we have, madam.

LUCHER. And you're granting them the best!

STRUP. It is a matter of tradition.

Act II

LUCHER. So? You're putting tradition ahead of common sense, are you?

STRUP (fearfully.) It isn't that, Frau Lucher, I only . . .

LUCHER (slapping the table.) The employees of this hotel will take their notions of tradition and of everything else from me! (She includes all of them in the same caustic glare.) You will serve Tizane with the roast—a half bottle for each of them. When they've guzzled at much, nothing but beer. Vienna beer, not Biermeister.

STRUP. Very good, ma'am.

LUCHER. A sage observation, Herr Strup. . . . Now, all of you, remember this: Courtesy, deference—treat them as if they were still lords of creation and as if you expected heavy tips for your services, which, I promise you, you won't get. All the old formalities, the old nonsense, from all of you—until they start breaking the furniture—then, a firm hand! If you can't manage them by yourselves, send for me.

STRUP. Yes, ma'am. We shall, ma'am.

LUCHER. You will serve the aperitifs in here. That's all.

STRUP. Yes, ma'am. To your posts, march! (The WAITERS and BUS-BOYS hurry out. LUCHER turns her attention to the men at the ladder.)

LUCHER. You! You have done enough fussing with the Emperor. Get that ladder out of here. (Hastily, they fold up the ladder and depart. . . . A BELL-BOY appears in the large door at the right, ushering in POFFY, now wearing

Act II

a once-resplendent uniform which reeks of moth-balls and naphtha.)

BOY. Herr Povoromo!

STRUP (*bowing low.*) Herr Baron.

POFFY (*mildly astonished.*) What? Oh! I'm greatly obliged for the restoration of the title. (*He bows.*) STRUP.)

LUCHER. Are they beginning to arrive?

POFFY. Yes—aperitifs are in order.

STRUP. Yes, Herr Baron. (BREDZI and STRUP *exit at the left.* POFFY *advances jauntily toward LUCHER.*)

POFFY. I came to see you about the final arrangements.

LUCHER. The final arrangements are made. (*March music off stage stops.*)

POFFY. In particular reference to the wine . . .

LUCHER (*consulting her list.*) With the soup, sherry nine schillings. With the trout, Grinzing—seven schillings. With the roast, Tizane—nine schillings.

POFFY (*shocked.*) Tizane! Is that the best that a superior establishment can afford?

LUCHER. On this occasion, yes.

POFFY. There will be complaints.

LUCHER. You people are not paying for this affair. I am.

POFFY. We are aware of that condition. Nevertheless—I must insist—there will be complaints.

ACT 11

LUCHER. Did that message you received say what time he would arrive?

POFFY. I expected him on the afternoon train from Salzburg. But he was not on it.

LUCHER (*with a look at her watch.*) No. It is now half after eight.

POFFY. There will be another train.

LUCHER. Yes—and he won't be on that, either. It's just as I thought. They've stopped him at the border. . . . Are there any unexpected arrivals?

POFFY. No. Here's the complete list. Only eight names instead of the expected thirty. (*Poffy takes the list from his pocket.*)

LUCHER. Let me see it. (*He hands it to her.* . . . TORLINI, *the hotel's courier, enters from the upper left, accompanied by an officer of police.*)

TORLINI. Frau Lucher!

LUCHER. Yes?

TORLINI. The police, ma'am. (*LUCHER is not in the least disturbed by this announcement. She is examining critically the list of guests.*)

LUCHER (*to the POLICEMAN.*) What do you want?

POLICEMAN. The Herr Inspector thought it might be as well for me to have a look around.

LUCHER. Go ahead and look. You'll observe nothing of the slightest interest. (*The POLICEMAN nods and looks about the room, paying special attention to the portrait of Franz Josef.*)

ACT II

POFFY. Surely, for only eight, you could afford Moët et Chandon, at the least.

LUCHER. No. There's not one on this list with a palate left to his name. The bottles of Tizane will be wrapped in napkins. No one will know the difference.

POFFY (*bowing*) As you say, my dear hostess.

LUCHER. Exactly as I say! (*She hands him back the list. The POLICEMAN is at the large door at the left.*)

POLICEMAN (*pointing off to the left.*) Will the reception be held in there?

LUCHER. Yes. And it will be kept in there. (*The POLICEMAN steps out at the left. LUCHER speaks in an undertone to POFFY.*) If he had arrived it would have been different. I would have served the best. I'd even have done it if she had consented to come. But for the rest of you, Tizane is good enough.

POFFY. She was right, of course. She'd have had a poor time.

LUCHER. Yes. She was right. . . . But I'd like to have heard what the great psychologist said to her after we left. (*The POLICEMAN has returned.*)

POLICEMAN. Who is to be present at this function?

POFFY. Here is the list. (*He hands the list to the POLICEMAN, then turns to LUCHER.*) And if he can find any cause for excitement in that group, then perhaps it may be a good party, after all.

POLICEMAN. Is this all?

LUCHER. That is all, and as I informed the inspector — there'll be no one of the slightest importance here

ACT II

to-night. (Having looked over the list, the POLICEMAN sticks it in the large note-book which he carries in a breast pocket.)

POLICEMAN. If you don't mind, I think I'll have a look at these guests of yours and make certain that this list is correct.

LUCHER. You're calling me a liar?

POLICEMAN. No. I'm only being careful. (He turns to the left and starts to go out.)

POFFY. Perhaps you'd like me to present them to you formally. (He and the POLICEMAN go out at the left.)

LUCHER. Torlini, give that policeman a drink.

TORLINI. Yes, ma'am. (He goes off at the left. FRAU LUCHER opens her hand-bag and takes therefrom a note-book and gold pencil. She is leaning over the little marble-topped table at the left, figuring out the cost of this affair. The aged CHEF rushes in from the right. He is in a state of terrific perturbation, as is a WAITER, who follows him.)

CHEF. Frau Lucher!

LUCHER (calmly.) Well—what is it? (Her back is toward the CHEF so that she does not see him bow low as the ARCHDUKE RUDOLF MAXIMILLIAN comes in from the right. . . . RUDOLF is tall, lean, deliberately ominous, consciously mad—an ageless prince who, despite the absurd inappropriateness of the Tyrolean costume that he now wears, brings back with him into the Hotel Lucher the semblance of imperial splendour which it had known when such outrageous beings as he were lords of Vienna. . . . He is followed by a WAITER and two Bus-Boys, who carry his cape, baversack,

ACT II

blanket roll and sword holster. Even these Bus-Boys, who were infants when the House of Habsburg fell—even they are awe-struck, trepidant in the presence of a magnificence which they have been rigorously taught to scorn. . . . RUDOLF crosses to LUCHER and administers a loving whack to her ample bottom.)

RUDOLF. Good evening, venerable strumpet.
(LUCHER turns, stares at him, mutters some blasphemous exclamation of dismay, curtseys involuntarily, then rushes to the doors at the left and shuts them. RUDOLF follows her.)

RUDOLF. Still wearing the red flannel drawers?
(He lifts her skirts from behind.) Thank God, there's something in Vienna that hasn't been changed.

LUCHER (*ferociously*). How did you come here?

RUDOLF. I came by various means of conveyance which I shall not describe in detail. My entrance to the hotel was made through the kitchens—and whatever appetite I may have had is now gone. You received no letter from me?

LUCHER. No.

RUDOLF. Good! I wrote none. (He strolls toward the right, pauses, and sniffs.) There's the same nauseating stench of fish in this hotel. By God—I believe it's the same fish!

LUCHER. Do *they* know?

RUDOLF. Who are they?

LUCHER. Poffy—Count von Stainz—Hoetzler . . .

RUDOLF. Is it necessary for me to advise *them* of my intentions? Is it?

ACT II

LUCHER. They will be startled.

RUDOLF. As they should be! I will occupy the Imperial Suite . . .

LUCHER. The Imperial Suite no longer exists.

RUDOLF. Restore it!

LUCHER (*to the Bus-Boys.*) Is that his luggage?

Bus-Boys (*eagerly.*) Yes, Frau Lucher. We were commanded to . . .

CHEF. Yes, Frau Lucher. His Imperial Highness ordered that we take it to . . .

LUCHER. Put it in there. (*She indicates the door at the back. The CHEF motions to the two Boys who hustle out as directed. The WAITER goes with them.*) Do you happen to know that the police are in the building?

RUDOLF. You! Were you addressing the chef?

LUCHER (*grudgingly.*) Your Imperial Highness. . . . (*To the CHEF.*) You may go. (*The CHEF starts to go out at the right.*)

RUDOLF. Wait! (*The CHEF stops, and bows.*) You recognized me, didn't you.

CHEF (*pleased.*) Yes, Your Serene Highness. (*He bows again.*)

RUDOLF. You did *not* recognize me. I am travelling incognito.

CHEF (*bowing.*) Yes, Your Serene Highness. (*He goes out at the right.*)

LUCHER. If your memory were better, you would remember that *this* was the Imperial Suite.

ACT II

RUDOLF (*looking about the room.*) By God, it is! (*He sees the portrait of Franz Josef, salutes it, then sits in the chair back of the table at the right and starts to take off his shoes. The WAITER comes out of the room at the back, followed by the Bus-Boys.*) I want some brandy.

LUCHER. Brandy.

WAITER (*bowing.*) At once, Your Serene Highness. (*He goes. RUDOLF is shaking some pebbles from one of his shoes into an ash-tray on the table.*)

RUDOLF. A cigarette.

LUCHER. Cigarette! (*One of the Bus-Boys places a cigarette between RUDOLF's "full, rich lips." The other boy lights it.*)

Bus-Boys (*bowing together.*) Your Serene Highness. (*They scurry out at the right. RUDOLF exhales a huge cloud of smoke. Then he laughs.*)

RUDOLF. It's incredible! I believe that even the aged worms in your woodwork recognize me, and are thrilled by my return. I don't blame them—after all these years with nothing to do but sit back and watch themselves decay. How have you managed to keep this decrepit establishment going?

LUCHER. We have plenty of trade. (*The WAITER comes in with a tray on which is a bottle of brandy and one enormous glass, which he puts on the table.*)

RUDOLF. Loud-mouthed American tourists, I suppose.

LUCHER. Yes! They flock here to ogle the scenes of your triumphs. (*She is pouring a drink of brandy.*)

ACT II

RUDOLF. Disgusting!

LUCHER (*to the WAITER.*) Tell Torlini I want to see him.

WAITER. Yes, Frau Lucher. (*The WAITER goes out, at the left.*)

RUDOLF. I find the whole aspect of this place depressing, and at the same time, rather gratifying. . . .

LUCHER (*interrupting him.*) Now, I wasn't joking when I warned you about the police. . . .

RUDOLF (*through her speech.*) Will you please not talk when I'm speaking? Sit down! (*Under protest, LUCHER has stopped talking and sits down across the table from him.*) Does this city realize that it's hopelessly defunct? It is like a corpse that twitches with the reflexes of life—a gruesome spectacle. I don't envy you, Lucher, having to abide here among the remains. . . . I didn't really mean that. I do envy you. (*He gulps some brandy.*) They drained the blood from Vienna when they removed us—and now observe the results! Serves the swine right. (*Another gulp.*)

LUCHER. Do you wish to change your clothes?

RUDOLF. Naturally, I don't intend to exhibit myself in this outlandish costume.

LUCHER (*rising.*) Then you had better go in there, and *stay* in there, till I can get rid of the police.

RUDOLF. Sit down! (*Subduing several choice oaths, she again sits.*) Who is here, besides Poffy and that senile incompetent, General Hoetzler?

ACT II

LUCHER. The Baroness von Krett, and Koeppe
and his wife, and Talisz . . .

RUDOLF. And Elena Vervesz. She is here, too.

LUCHER. No.

RUDOLF. She is late.

LUCHER. She is not coming!

RUDOLF. What? She is not in Vienna?

LUCHER. Yes—but she has flatly refused to come

RUDOLF. Oh! She didn't know I would be here
. . . Married, isn't she?

LUCHER. Yes. To a doctor—a very important
doctor.

RUDOLF. I have a distinct feeling that he will be
called out to-night, to some distant place—an emergency
. . . Have you seen her lately?

LUCHER. I went to her house to-day. (*The orchestra*
starts off stage, playing the opening bars of "The Blue Danube.")

RUDOLF. How is she? Old?

LUCHER. No. (*Reminded by the music that the door*
open, she rises and starts over toward the left.)

RUDOLF. Does she bulge? (*LUCHER does not answer*
He roars.) Does she BULGE? (*LUCHER turns to him.*)
Here? (*He indicates breasts.*)

LUCHER. No! (*She shuts the doors at the left, so that*
the music can now be heard only faintly.)

RUDOLF. Send for her.

LUCHER. She will not come.

ACT II

RUDOLF. Tell her that her one true lover has condescended to be present.

LUCHER. I tell you, *she will not come!*

RUDOLF (*rising suddenly.*) And I am telling you that she *will* come!

LUCHER. She has a different life now . . .

RUDOLF (*advancing.*) If by any chance she should not be here when I am ready . . . (*He takes hold of her throat.*) But you know the consequences—don't you, old filthy? You know! (*He laughs, gives her a playful shake, and kisses her.*)

LUCHER (*through his kisses.*) There is something else in Vienna that is not changed. You! You are the same maniac—like all your wretched family. (*RUDOLF laughs, releases her, and walks over to the table at the right.*)

RUDOLF. No—not a maniac. It is only that I am constantly intoxicated with my own charm. (*He starts to yodel. He picks up the bottle and glass, also his green Tyrolean hat.*) I want a valet. (*He puts on his hat and crosses to LUCHER.*) Tell Elena to take all the time she wants. I don't approve of women who jump into their clothes like fire-horses. She must make every possible effort to look alluring. (*He pinches her and strolls off yodelling into the bedroom at the back. He starts to remove his clothes.* LUCHER nervously rushes up with unusual alacrity and closes the doors after him. *Then she crosses to the doors at the left, opens them, and calls :*)

LUCHER. Strup! (*The music is playing loudly.*) Strup!

STRUP (*from off stage.*) Yes, Frau Lucher. (*He hurries in.*)

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LUCHER (*in measured tones.*) You will take the Tizan off the ice. We will serve champagne—Cliquot 1911.

STRUP. What?

LUCHER. Did you hear!

STRUP (*astounded.*) The Cliquot 1911. (LUCHER crosses slowly to the table at the right.)

LUCHER. Yes, and there will be nine covers, instead of eight. Have them get that big chair that's in the office—that gold chair. (TORLINI has appeared in the doorway, followed by the POLICEMAN, whom LUCHER does not at first see.)

STRUP. Yes, ma'am. Nine covers. (*Hearing this, the POLICEMAN takes out his note-book and the list of guests which POFFY had given him.*)

LUCHER. Put the gold chair at the head of the table. And I want caviar served. . . .

TORLINI. You sent for me, Frau Lucher?

LUCHER. Yes, I did. (*She sees the POLICEMAN. But it's . . .*)

POLICEMAN. Nine covers? There are only eight here.

LUCHER. I neglected to count myself. I am to attend the party.

POLICEMAN. The gold chair will be for you?

LUCHER. Why not? It's my hotel, isn't it? Go on, Strup, do as you're told. (*STRUP goes out at the left. LUCHER goes close to TORLINI.*)

LUCHER. I want to send a message—(*The POLICEMAN is evincing interest. LUCHER is frantically attempting*

Act II

to signal to TORLINI to get rid of the POLICEMAN)—to the florist's. The flowers they sent are all wilted. (*The POLICEMAN is watching too closely—LUCHER goes over to him, fire in her eyes.*) And as for you—I'd be grateful if you'd go straight to the Herr Inspector and tell him that I consider this intrusion by the police an unpardonable outrage! Do you hear that?

POLICEMAN. Yes—Frau Lucher. I hear. But surely you'll agree that the police must be . . .

LUCHER (*shouting*). I'll agree to nothing! I've taken great pains to explain this whole affair to the authorities and they assured me that there would be no interference.

POLICEMAN. I only know that I have been ordered to look in here, and . . .

LUCHER. And you've obeyed your orders. (*She opens her hand-bag.*) You've seen everything and satisfied yourself that nothing harmful can come of this. It's all ridiculous stupidity, typical of the brainless asses who govern this city. (*She has fished some bills from her hand-bag.*) Here, my good man. (*She hands the money to him.*) Now run along to the inspector, and present to him my sincerest compliments. (*She pushes him toward the door.*)

POLICEMAN. I will, Frau Lucher! (*He pockets the money.*) And if he sends me back, it won't be my fault.

LUCHER. I know that. Go on. (*She pushes him out, then addresses TORLINI, rapidly, in a furious undertone.*) See that that policeman gets out of the hotel. Then telephone to Dr. Anton Krug's house, and tell Frau Krug that the worst has happened!

ACT II

TORLINI. The worst?

LUCHER. She'll understand. Tell her to get into a car and drive out of Vienna just as fast as she can.

TORLINI. Yes, Frau Lucher. . . . But what about the florist?

LUCHER (*at the top of her lungs.*) Great God! Never mind the florist! (*The door at the back opens, and RUDOLF appears wearing his shirt and nothing else.*)

RUDOLF. Where in hell is that valet?

LUCHER. Get back in that room!

TORLINI (*staring at RUDOLF.*) It is impossible!

LUCHER. I told you to stay in . . .

RUDOLF. Is there such a thing as a valet in this brothel?

LUCHER. Yes, he's coming right up.

RUDOLF. Thank you, my sweet. (*He pinches her cheek.*)

TORLINI (*bowing low.*) Your Imperial Highness.

RUDOLF reaches out and lifts TORLINI's bowed head.)

RUDOLF. I do not remember who you are—nevertheless, good evening. (*He bows to TORLINI, then turns and walks back with great dignity, albeit without trousers, into his room. LUCHER slams the door behind him.*)

LUCHER. Now do you know what I meant by the worst?

TORLINI (*trembling.*) I do.

LUCHER. Tell her he's here. . . . When he finds out she isn't in this hotel, there'll be an uproar. He'll

Act II

after her. He'll break into her house, and have a fight with her husband. If she wants to avoid a nasty scene, she'll have to get herself out of the city, at once. (*The COUNT has come in from the left. He is carrying a cocktail glass. TORLINI goes.*)

COUNT. Now let me tell you something, Frau Lucher: I just happened to take a look under the napkin in one of the ice buckets, and what did I see there? Tizane—that's what I saw! Tizane—sparkling dishwater! (*LUCHER has been gathering up the papers from the table and stuffing them back into her hand-bag. She darts one look at the COUNT.*)

LUCHER. You're drunk already.

COUNT. Oh, now, that isn't worthy of you, Lucher. It hasn't been easy for us to come here, you know. If you had the heart to invite us here, I should think you'd have the decency to furnish us with wine that is at least potable. (*LUCHER, however, has gone out at the right. GISELLA VON KRETT has come in from the left. She was once one of the haughtier beauties of the court. She is now a wasted, embittered governess, clinging grimly to the sense of snobbery which is all that she managed to salvage from the wreckage of the past. She is wearing an evening gown which was fashionable in 1917.*)

GISELLA. Well? Did you tell her we insisted on champagne?

COUNT. Yes, but she didn't seem to hear me. (*GISELLA sits down at the left.*)

GISELLA. We should have known that this would happen. She dragged us here solely to humiliate us for

ACT II

the satisfaction of her own vulgarian sense of inferiority.

COUNT. Ah, well, my dear Gisella—Tizane isn't really so unbearable. I mean to say, after the first three glasses you hardly know what you're drinking. I shall consume the first three glasses rapidly.

HOETZLER (*from offstage*) I hurled in the 19th army corps—or was it the 17th? (*He enters from the left with SOPHIA KOEPPKE on his arm.*) . . . And in another twelve hours we'd have smashed the Russian line. (*He sees the COUNT.*) Franz!

COUNT. General Hoetzler! (*They bow formally and shake hands.* . . . The old GENERAL is still fat but obviously shrunken; he hasn't flesh enough left to fill his skin. He wears a uniform coat, which is too large for him by many years, but moths have deprived him of the trousers that go with it and he is forced to wear a pair from his gray civilian suit. . . . In spite of which, he is wilfully hearty, and determined to make this a gay and care-free celebration. . . . SOPHIA is a faded blonde, buxom and—unlike the others—too well fed, but still flagrantly girlish.)

HOETZLER. This is splendid, old boy.

SOPHIA (*who has gone over to GISELLA.*) My darling Gisella! How stunning you look!

GISELLA (*without emotion.*) Good evening, Sophia.

HOETZLER. Gisella! Smart, distinguished, entrancing as ever!

SOPHIA. Now you must all be quiet, because dear General Hoetzler is telling me the most thrilling story about the campaign in 1915.

ACT 11

COUNT. Oh, yes, indeed—I remember it well. You had the Russians in a tight corner—eh, General? Now do sit down, Sophia. (*She sits down at the right. . . .*
fended at this abrupt dismissal of his favourite reminiscence, GENERAL makes an attempt to continue.)

HOETZLER. I was trying to explain to Sophia how curious it was that, at the very moment of complete triumph . . . (*But the COUNT has his back turned.*)

COUNT (*to SOPHIA.*) I can't tell you what a delightful privilege it is to see a really stylish woman again.

SOPHIA (*giggling shrilly.*) Oh, Franz—you're much too gallant.

COUNT. With provocation, my dear.

SOPHIA. But Koeppke and I do try to keep up appearances, even in the hopelessly middle-class atmosphere of Switzerland.

COUNT. As Tatti and I do, in Upper Tooting. But it's an endless struggle.

SOPHIA. Dreadful! People don't seem to understand the importance of those things any more. There are so many false standards.

COUNT. That's it! That's precisely it! (*During all this, HOETZLER has sat down on the couch beside GISELLA, and is carrying on manfully with his narrative.*)

HOETZLER. I was just telling Sophia of the time early in 1915 when we had the Russians on the run. We were within that of breaking through the enemy's line;

ACT II

and they had no more than a corporal's guard in reserve
You can readily imagine the consequences. We'd have
marched on to Petersburg, crushed the Russian Empire.
But at the very moment when my plan of campaign had
reached a climax . . . (By this time the COUNT has said
"That's precisely it!" and has been compelled, by the loudness
of HOETZLER'S voice, to turn to listen.) I received a telegram
from Prince Max in Berlin telling me to withdraw.
Now I ask you, I ask all of you, what was I to do?

COUNT. Withdraw.

HOETZLER. Exactly. And the baffling part of it all
is that that telegram from Berlin has never been ade-
quately explained. And I can tell you, my dear Gisella
...

COUNTESS (*from offstage.*) They're all in here. (The
COUNTESS and TALISZ come in, arm in arm. She is now wearing
an evening dress, of her own manufacture, and there is an ostrich
plume or so in her hair. . . . TALISZ is very old, somewhat
bemused and slightly deaf. He is wearing a frayed swallow-
tail coat, lustreless, black satin knee breeches, and black cotton
stockings borrowed from his landlady. . . . There are general
greetings, all very formal, very courtly.)

COUNTESS. Gisella! Sophia! Well!

SOPHIA. Well!

GISELLA (*acidly.*) The General is telling us about
telegram from Berlin.

HOETZLER. I was merely explaining that there
was a certain faction in Prussia headed by Hindenburg
that did not wish Austria to achieve . . .

ACT II

TALISZ (to SOPHIA.) And where is Koepcke? I
can't see him. Isn't he to be with us? (The COUNTESS
is his arm and indicates that he has interrupted the
GENERAL.)

HOETZLER (giving TALISZ an angry look.) There can
be no question of doubt that Hindenburg was jealous of
the inevitable result of my coup. He knew my victory
would destroy the Russian power and Austria would
take the credit for having won the war.

TALISZ (who doesn't quite know what's happening.) Is
the Imperial Highness here yet?

SOPHIA. No. Poffy's out now trying to find out
whether there's any word of him.

TALISZ. I beg your pardon?

COUNTESS (distinctly, in his ear.) She said: "Poffy's
out now trying to find out if there's any word of him."

TALISZ. Oh, yes, I knew that. I felt sure he'd
done.

HOETZLER. Hindenburg, of course, was a Prussian
and the Prussians—contemptuous of Austria, deter-
mined to . . .

TALISZ. What's the General saying?

COUNTESS. Something about the war.

TALISZ. Oh! Too bad. (He moves away. . . .
told by the frequent interruptions, HOETZLER makes a
further attempt to complete his story.)

HOETZLER. I knew it at the time, but my obli-
gations as a soldier to our allies compelled me to silence.

ACT II

Hindenburg blocked my plans and then deliberately stole them! Stole them—and used them himself in the Masurian Lakes region! That, my friends, is the true explanation of . . . (POFFY enters. The COUNT, COUNTESS and SOPHIA rush over to question him.)

SOPHIA. Poffy, is there any news?

COUNT. What about Rudolf? Is he coming?

POFFY. No. The last train from Salzburg is in, but he wasn't on it.

COUNTESS. Oh! I can't bear to think they've caught him. (She is apparently on the verge of tears, her favourite perch.)

SOPHIA. He must come. He must!

POFFY. Of course with Rudolf there is always hope.

HOETZLER. Of course there is hope. Rudolf was always late. Do you remember the time, my dear Gisella, when the Emperor was holding a reception for King Edward VII?

GISELLA. No. (STRUP has come in, followed by two WAITERS with trays loaded with glasses of tepid vermouth.)

STRUP (speaking through HOETZLER'S lines.) Herr Baron, the aperitifs!

POFFY. By all means proceed with them.

STRUP. Thank you, Herr Baron. (The service of the aperitifs proceeds, under STRUP's benign supervision, whilst HOETZLER continues with his reminiscence about the reception for King Edward VII.)

Act II

HOETZLER (*taking GISELLA's "No" as cue.*) Matters the utmost importance were at stake, and the Emperor had commanded all the members of the royal family to be most punctual. And of course they all were with one exception. . . . (*The WAITER offers HORRER a drink, which he takes, and then continues:*) With exception—Rudolf. He was a mere stripling then, even so, he kept the King of England waiting for hours while he . . . (*The VALET has come in from right and gone up to the bedroom door. He knocks.*)

LUDOLF (*from within.*) Come in.

HOETZLER. Who's in that room?

OPHIA (*archly.*) Now—now, General!

HOETZLER. But if there's anybody spying on us . . .

OFFY. He'll be bitterly disappointed. Now if you all be good enough to rise. (*They all rise. OFFY s and lifts his glass to the portrait of Franz Josef.*) To Imperial Majesty! (*They all drink and then give silent, testimony to the low quality of the vermouth. . . . The sessive silence is broken by the entrance from the left of OEPPEK, a brisk, obtrusive little man who, like his wife, HIA, is too well nourished.*)

OEPPEK (*breezily.*) Well, here I am!

OPHIA. You're late.

OEPPEK. Yes, my love. (*He looks about.*) Is the γ in full swing?

GISELLA. It is.

OFFY. Oh, come—let's go in to dinner.

Act II

GISELLA. I've lost my appetite. That loathsome vermouth . . .

POFFY. I know, my dear Gisella, you're accustomed to the best in Palermo. As for the rest of us, we have come here to conduct a celebration. It is going to be a difficult task, but I strongly urge that we all smother our justifiable grievances and pretend to be having a very devil of an uproarious carousal. Let us close our eyes to the fact that we all look a bit moth-eaten and concentrate on getting through this with a show of good grace. (*The COUNT starts to sing: "Vilya, oh, Vilya, the witch of the wood."*)

GISELLA. We're not going to be very uproarious on Tizane.

HOETZLER. I beg of you, Gisella, be quiet.

SOPHIA (*referring to the COUNT's song.*) That's a cheerful selection!

GISELLA (*to POFFY.*) If you'd only taken the trouble to let us know what it would be like . . .

COUNTESS. It wasn't Poffy's fault.

KOEPPKE. Personally I'm in favour of abandoning the whole thing. (*The COUNTESS has started to weep. SOPHIA is trying to calm her. The COUNT is slumped in a chair at the left, still singing "Vilya."*) GISELLA is seated at the right, regarding the COUNTESS with disgust. HOETZLER and TALISZ are behind her. POFFY has gone out at the left to beg the musicians for God's sake to play something lively. KOEPPKE is hovering over the couch, patronizing the COUNTESS. *The following speeches are delivered in a jumble :)*

ACT II

SOPHIA. I wish to heaven you'd all listen to Poffy. At least we can pretend to be gay and—and jolly. . . . Now, please, Tatti, you won't help matters at all by crying your eyes out . . .

HOETZLER. Perhaps if Lucher would give us some really good beer it might take effect more quickly.

Together TALISZ (*to HOETZLER.*) What's everybody saying now?

KOEPPKIE (*to the Countess and Sophia.*) I'll tell you what. How about the three of us slipping down to the bar and having a few brandies? Just the three of us. Oh, don't worry—I can pay for them. I've over a hundred and fifty real marks in my pocket at this moment! (*ELENA has entered on the cue from TALISZ: "What's everybody saying now?" She comes down from the upper right, so that TALISZ and HOETZLER see her first.*)

ELENA. Talisz! I did so hope you'd be here. And the dear General. How sweet it is to see you.

TALISZ. Elena! Elena! (*He kisses her hand.*)

HOETZLER. Elena, is it you? (*POFFY has come back; he sees ELENA, and fairly whoops for joy.*)

POFFY. Elena! (*The others are now aware of her presence. They cease their chattering, weeping and singing, and form a hilarious, welcoming group about her.*)

ELENA. Tatti! You should have known. I couldn't keep away. And Sophia! How charming

ACT II

you look ! And Koeppke ! I can't believe it ! Hello, Franz—you knew I'd be here, didn't you !

COUNT. A good joke on us ! A capital joke ! Just like you, Elena. Bring some more drinks. Herr Ober ! Herr Ober ! (The COUNT rushes out at the left.)

HOETZLER. Where's that blackguard gone with the aperitifs ?

ELENA. And here's Gisella. How are you, my darling ? You're looking so chic, so exactly like yourself.

GISELLA. They told me you weren't coming.

COUNTESS. She wanted to surprise us—to make it all the better.

KOEPPKE. And that's what she's done.

ELENA. I changed my mind for no reason except a selfish one. I wanted to see all of you—and hear you laugh and joke. (A veritable orgy of ad-libbing is interrupted when the COUNT appears in the doorway at the left.)

COUNT (shouting.) Come in to dinner ! They're serving champagne !

SOPHIA. What ?

COUNT. Cliquot 1911 ! And caviar ! (The COUNT's announcement is greeted with cheers. POFFY's request for lively music has been fulfilled by the orchestra offstage. There is a general movement toward the left.)

HOETZLER (offering ELENA his arm.) With your permission, I think I take the precedence. (ELENA takes the GENERAL's arm and goes out at the left, followed by KOEPPKE and the COUNTESS, POFFY and GISELLA, TALIS.

ACT II

nd SOPHIA. Just as ELENA reaches the door, LUCHER enters from the right and rushes across after them shouting :)

LUCHER. Frau Krug! Frau Krug! Did you get my message? (Her voice is lost in the din of laughter, talk and music. . . . ELENA goes out. LUCHER is going after her, but she stops when cries for "Help!" are heard from the bedroom at the back. The bedroom door flies open and the VALET hurries out, propelled by RUDOLF, who is now magnificent in his uniform. . . . LUCHER hastily shuts the doors at the left.)

VALET. Frau Lucher! He threatened to strangle me!

RUDOLF. Do you mean to tell me that that stable-boy is dignified with the title of valet?

VALET (terrified.) I was only trying to brush Your Highness's hair.

RUDOLF. He scratched my ear. (RUDOLPH slaps the VALET, who rushes out at the right. RUDOLF starts to fasten on his golden sash.)

LUCHER. You're to stay in that room until I tell you it's safe to . . .

RUDOLF. Is she here? (TORLINI comes in from the upper left.)

LUCHER (to RUDOLF.) I told you she wouldn't come!

TORLINI. They informed me that she had already left her house, on the way here. . . .

RUDOLF (turning, to LUCHER). Ah! Then she has arrived?

Act II

LUCHER. I've warned you that the police are on the watch . . .

RUDOLF. She's here, isn't she?

LUCHER. No! (*He tweaks her nose.*) Yes!

RUDOLF. Good! You have acted with unexpected competence. Bring her to me.

LUCHER. But they have just sat down to supper. You should join them.

RUDOLF. Bring her here! And champagne with her. I shall not be hungry for another forty-three minutes. (*He crosses to the right to examine himself in the mirror.*)

LUCHER (*to TORLINI.*) Request Frau Krug to come here for a moment. (*TORLINI goes out at the left.*)

RUDOLF. Frau Krug?

LUCHER. That is her name! (*RUDOLF turns again to the mirror, with an expression of disgust.*) You'd better be careful how you talk to her.

RUDOLF. You may now depart, Lucher.

LUCHER. She isn't the same one you used to make free with. Her husband is a very fine man—a big man, too, and . . . (*RUDOLF steps up on a chair, the better to see the reflection of his sash in the mirror.*)

RUDOLF. I shall want some champagne—and also more cognac . . .

LUCHER. I tell you—you'd better not try any of your old tricks on her. She's different. (*The doors at the left are opened. ELENA appears, looking backward.*)

Act II

COUNTESS (from offstage.) But, my little angel, you're not going?

ELENA. No, no, Tatti, don't you worry, I'll be right back.

COUNT. Immediately——

ELENA. Yes, immediately. (She turns and sees RUDOLF on the chair, his back to her.)

RUDOLF. And one other thing: the towels in my bathroom are soggy. I have them changed. . . . Get out, Lucifer! (LUCIFER darts one glance of commiseration at ELENA, folds her hands over her protuberant stomach, and goes out at the right. ELENA stares at RUDOLF's back. He gazes at her image in the mirror. . . . After a few moments, he steps down from the chair, turns and confronts her. . . . The doors at the left have been closed, but the strains of a waltz are faintly audible. . . . RUDOLF starts toward her, pauses, then walks around her. ELENA does not move, but her eyes follow him. . . . He is behind her. He reaches out to touch her, but doesn't touch her. He walks around, in front of her, stares at her, then slaps her face. He seizes her in his arms and kisses her, fiercely. . . . A WAITER has come from the right with a bottle of cognac and glasses, followed by a BUS-BOY with an ice bucket containing a bottle of champagne. They deposit these at the right, gaping at RUDOLF and ELENA as they do so.)

RUDOLF. How long has it been since you were kissed like that? Ten years? More than ten years! Think of it! (The WAITER makes a slight clatter as he arranges the glasses on the table. . . . RUDOLF, still holding ELENA tightly, motions behind his back to the WAITER to get out. He does

Act II

so, followed by the Bus-Boy. RUDOLF kisses ELENA more gently.) Come—we'll have a drink! (He steps aside, motions her to the table. She crosses slowly and sits down. He goes behind the table and fills each of the glasses with equal quantities of brandy and champagne.)

ELENA. You know—I realize now how completely I had forgotten you.

RUDOLF. Yes—it's too bad. We're not equipped with the power to recall sensations. One of our Creator's more serious mistakes. . . . However—to-night we will both refresh our memories. (He raises his glass, toasting her, then drains it. She raises her glass, slightly, then places it on the table, untouched.) That's a very graceful tribute, Elena. I'm referring to the necklace. But—good God! That wedding ring! (He laughs boisterously and seizes her hand for closer inspection of the ring.)

ELENA. That's nothing to laugh at. (She is trying to pull her hand away, but he has a tight grip on her wrist.)

RUDOLF. Of all the bourgeois adornments! On you, it is a gross anachronism. Like a brassiere on the Venus de Milo. It offends me. We must remove it. (He snatches the ring from her finger.)

ELENA. Give it back to me!

RUDOLF. I told you it offends me.

ELENA (struggling.) Are you going to give me back my ring?

RUDOLF. Yes, my darling—I'll give it back, cheerfully, in the morning. But in the meantime—well—surely, you can understand my point. That heavy gold band on your finger would strike a discordant note.

ACT II

ELENA. I'm not planning to be in communication with you to-morrow morning. I want it *now!* (*She snatches for it.*)

RUDOLF (*pocketing the ring.*) I must ask you to be careful, Elena. Refrain from irritating me. You will recall that the members of my mother's family are subject to epileptic rages—sheer exuberance, you know—which invariably result in one form or another of physical violence. . . . I should not care to send you back to your husband with your lovely nose broken, and minus one or two conspicuous teeth. . . .

ELENA (*staring at him.*) It can't be true!

RUDOLF. On the contrary, I can assure you that one more allusion to that detestable ring will prove that it is true. . . .

ELENA. I wasn't thinking about that. I was thinking of what ten years have failed to do to you.

RUDOLF. I chose to remain as I was.

ELENA. Ten years of exile, and humiliation, and poverty, haven't shaken in you the conviction that Franz Josef is still reigning in Schönbrunn.

RUDOLF. No—I admit that I have occasional qualms. There are moments when I suspect that the Habsburgs are not what they once were. But when I see you, my eternally beloved, and realize that you have had the pride to preserve your figure against the day of my return—then I know that there has been no revolution. (*He has sat down on the table, and is leaning over her, his face increasingly close to hers.*)

ELENA. Don't come near me.

ACT II

RUDOLF. You don't wish to be kissed?

ELENA. I do not!

RUDOLF. Very well—if you feel that you need the inspiration of a little more champagne, you shall have it. . . . (He goes to pour out another glass for her, but finds that she has had none. He empties her glass into the ice bucket and refills it. He then hands it to her. She places it on the table. He pours out more for himself.)

ELENA (rising.) We must go in there and join the others.

RUDOLF (pouring.) We must do nothing of the kind.

ELENA. I came here to-night to be with them . . .

RUDOLF. Whereas I came here to be with you. Those pitiful relics are of no interest whatever to me. . . . Come now—drink!

ELENA. I'm going in there. (He steps in front of her.)

RUDOLF. No, you're not.

ELENA. Get out of my way. (He laughs and gives some more champagne, but does not budge. She softens her tone to one of persuasion.) Oh, Rudolf—I'll tell them you're here. It's all that's needed to send the poor things into a complete state of delirium. Think of the excitement when they see you looking as young as ever, and handsome, in your lovely uniform, with all the medals. Think how pleased he'd be (pointing to the portrait) if I knew that a Habsburg was again holding court in Vienna.

RUDOLF (with a glance at the portrait.) Very well—I'll show myself to them—for his sake. (He kisses her lightly on the forehead, then crosses to the left and tries the door.)

ACT II

is locked. He turns to ELENA, delighted.) Lucher's had us locked in—the tactful old bawd. (He pounds on the door. It is opened. The guests at the banquet offstage are making a great deal of noise, indicative of well-bred hilarity. The voice of STRUP is heard to call out: "His Imperial Highness!" RUDOLF stands in the doorway. The shouts and murmurs stop as each of the guests sees him. BREDZI's little orchestra strikes up the old national anthem. RUDOLF turns and glances at ELENA. She points to the portrait of the late Emperor, and he goes up and takes a position beneath it. POFFY comes in and bows low. The others follow him, the ladies going up to him to kiss his hand. RUDOLF greets each of them by name. He is impassive, regal, mildly disdainful—just as they want him to be. The Countess begins to sob.)

RUDOLF. That is enough—enough! (He waves them out.) I may join you later in the evening. (They all back out. From offstage, the Count is heard to shout: "To his Imperial Highness.") ELENA lifts her untouched glass of champagne and sips. There are sounds of shattered glasses from the left. The doors are closed, subduing the uproar of cheers.)

RUDOLF. Why are they all so old? (He gazes toward the left, despondently, then suddenly decides to give this depressing matter not another thought. He turns to ELENA.) Well? Have I or have I not done my duty? (He comes down to the table.) Sit down, if you please. (She sits down at the right of the table. He leans over and kisses her hair.) Now! I suggest that we discuss briefly your husband, before we pass on to more mutually agreeable subjects. . . . Do you love him?

ELENA. Very much.

ACT II

RUDOLF. I have no objection to that. . . . He's a doctor, isn't he?

ELENA. A psychoanalyst.

RUDOLF. Ah! A practitioner of Vienna's sole remaining industry. . . . I've been told he's quite brilliant. Written a book, hasn't he?

ELENA. Yes—eight volumes.

RUDOLF. I must meet him and let him study me. He could derive enough material for eight volumes more.

ELENA. He knows all about you already.

RUDOLF. Ah—you've told him!

ELENA. Yes. You'll find your type analyzed in one of his books under the heading, "Elephantiasis of the Ego."

RUDOLF. I doubt that I'd be interested. (*He sits down at the left of the table.*) Have you any children?

ELENA. No.

RUDOLF. I extend my condolences. (*He lifts his glass as in a toast. She bows slightly in acknowledgment.*) These purely intellectual husbands are not very productive, are they?

ELENA. It isn't his fault that there are no children. It's my fault. . . . Are there any more questions?

RUDOLF. Let me see . . . No—I think there aren't. We can dismiss the dreary topic of your domestic life—and press on to consideration of my own. But I suppose you know all about it.

ELENA. No, Rudolf. I have not followed your later career very closely.

Act II

RUDOLF. No?

ELENA. No. How have you supported yourself?

RUDOLF. In various ways. Now and then a good run at baccarat. One or two engagements in the cinema studios—did you see me in "The Shattered Idol?"

ELENA. No, I missed that, deliberately.

RUDOLF. You did well. As it turned out, I was virtually invisible. Then I conceived a great scheme for mulcting American tourists, but the authorities got wind of it, and took over the idea themselves. There have been other occupations.

ELENA. Someone told me you've been running a taxi.

RUDOLF. Merely an amusing whim. I've only driven people I know.

ELENA. And if you don't know them when you start the drive, you do before it's finished.

RUDOLF (*laughing*). You've evidently been listening to gossip.

ELENA. Yes. I've heard how charming you are to your fares. You must have collected many delightful friends that way.

RUDOLF (*wistfully*). Friends? You can hardly call them that.

ELENA. No—I suppose not.

RUDOLF. As a matter of fact, Elena, Nice is a bore. I have been very lonely.

ELENA. I've been waiting for you to say that.

ACT II

RUDOLF. You have no sympathy for me?

ELENA. No.

RUDOLF. Your heart wasn't always cold.

ELENA. You have never been lonely—never deserved one atom of sympathy, from anyone.

RUDOLF. You don't understand me. No one has ever understood me. It's because I'm inscrutable.

ELENA. Perhaps. But I remain unimpressed by your appeal for pity.

RUDOLF. *Pity!* Have you the effrontery to suggest that I want you to pity me?

ELENA. Yes!

RUDOLF. I see. . . . Then I shall abandon that tack. (*He laughs.*) Elena—it has always seemed miraculous to me that anyone could be as intelligent as you are and still alluring. And you *are* alluring!

ELENA (*bowing.*) You're overwhelmingly kind.

RUDOLF. Oh—that wasn't intended as a tribute to you. It's a tribute to my own flawless taste.

ELENA. Ah! I see.

RUDOLF. I'm proud to think that it was I who first realized you, for the sight of you now assures me that, by God, I was right. . . . You're so beautiful, Elena. So *beautiful!* You delight me! You refresh me—and I am speaking nothing less than the truth when I tell you that refreshment is what I most urgently need.

ELENA. What tack are you off on now?

RUDOLF. None. I am driving straight to the point. . . . My room is in there.

Act II

ELENA. How convenient !

RUDOLF. Yes. It's a room that we have occupied before.

ELENA. I suppose we've occupied all of them.

RUDOLF. We have, indeed, my darling. We have made history in this hotel. Come—let us make some more.

ELENA (*pause.*) Rudolf . . .

RUDOLF. Yes ?

ELENA. I think it's time for me to announce that I'm not going to bed with you.

RUDOLF (*after a while.*) Very well. (*He stands up, as though accepting her rejection, and walks away. Drink in hand, he turns and looks at her.*) I can wait (*he sips the drink*) . . . a few minutes. (*He looks toward the left.*) Who's playing in there ?

ELENA. Bredzi.

RUDOLF (*pleased.*) Bredzi ! (*He goes to the left and calls "Bredzi ! Bredzi ! "* The doors are opened and BREDZI comes in, with his violin. He is in a fever of excitement, and knows precisely what is expected of him. Following him is JANSEI, an accordion player, similarly thrilled by this summons.) A waltz ! (*With appropriate flourishes, they start to play "Viennese Beauties."*) RUDOLF turns and crosses to the table where ELENA is sitting. The musicians follow him, playing as they go. RUDOLF bows before ELENA. Laughing, she rises and curtseys, and then they start to waltz around the room. The tempo is sprightly, exuberant. . . . RUDOLF manages to manœuvre ELENA to the bedroom door. He kicks

Act II

it open and they waltz into the room and disappear. The musicians whisper to each other happily—for this is just as it should be. . . . However, after a moment, ELENA comes alone, laughing. RUDOLF follows. She sits on the couch. You know—I'm being admirably patient with you.

ELENA (*still laughing.*) Yes, Rudolf—I know.

RUDOLF. Because I understand you, too well. I can read your thoughts.

ELENA. No!

RUDOLF. I can see that as a result of your pure spiritual marriage you have developed a certain reluctance, which it is for me to overcome. Very well! accept the challenge confidently! (*He has a drink of champagne, then turns to BREDZI.*) Play something more—more. . . . (*BREDZI understands, and obliges with palpitanitly passionate selection.* For a moment, RUDOLF stands, silently regarding ELENA.) Does that remind you of anything?

ELENA. Yes.

RUDOLF. What?

ELENA. Ischl! (*RUDOLF crosses to the couch and lies down beside her. Knowing all the moves in this game, BREDZI goes close to ELENA and plays softly, persuasively.*)

RUDOLF. Ischl! Do you remember one night when it was too warm to stay indoors?

ELENA. Yes, we went out into the forest, and you took along an entire symphony orchestra to accompany us.

RUDOLF. I always adored music.

ACT II

ELENA. And you had all the musicians blindfolded. The poor things. They couldn't play in harmony because they couldn't see.

RUDOLF. It was dreadful!

ELENA. And you cursed the leader horribly—and beat him with your cane.

RUDOLF. And when you tried to stop me, I knocked you down.

ELENA. Then you dismissed the orchestra—and we went on with our romance.

RUDOLF. Ah God, what beautiful times! (ELENA is now lying back on the couch, languorously. RUDOLF kisses the hollow of her throat. Then it occurs to him to kiss her ankle. BREDZI feels that it is time to shift the tune. . . . Raising up on his elbow, RUDOLF suddenly signals the musicians to be quiet.) Do you imagine that I need any artificial stimulation from you. Get out! (They hurry out at the left, closing the door after them. RUDOLF stands up.) It's no use bantering this way and that about it, Elena. I know now if I didn't know before that I have never loved any woman as I love you. When I see you I know that I've never loved any one else at all. You were, you are and ever will be the one passion of my life. . . . Now! Glow with justifiable pride.

ELENA. I am glowing. . . . What other women have you known since then?

RUDOLF. Plenty. All kinds.

ELENA. All colours?

RUDOLF. All shades. There have been French women, English women, Americans. I've had a few

ACT II

tempting offers of marriage, but . . . Then there have been Russians, Moroccans, Siamese . . .

ELENA. Twins?

RUDOLF. No, unfortunately. But I can swear to you Elena, that all of them were no more than incidents. Whatever enjoyment I've had from them—and I'll be generous and admit that there has been some enjoyment—has been vicarious. Every quivering one of them has been no more than a proxy for you. Ah, Elena—if you could know how I've clung to you, how I've cherished you. Memory has been kind to me, my darling. It has kept you with me, through all the nights and days. (*He is again on the couch, at her side. She jumps to her feet, walks quickly away. There is a nervous irritability in her voice.*)

ELENA. It has been otherwise with me!

RUDOLF. What do you mean?

ELENA. Memory has been kinder to me. It has discreetly withdrawn . . .

RUDOLF. Behind the curtains of your imagination—but it is still there, alive and warm, aching to emerge.

ELENA. No, it is dead!

RUDOLF. I refuse to accept that sight unseen.

ELENA. I have looked behind the curtains and seen it. It is decayed and loathsome.

RUDOLF. You're talking nonsense from your husband's books.

ELENA. I'm talking truth—bitter truth, for you, perhaps.

RUDOLF. I don't believe it.

Act II

ELENA. Because you will not face the one important fact.

RUDOLF. Which is what?

ELENA. I am happy with my husband. (*He laughs.*) I love him!

RUDOLF. You will notice that I am laughing.

ELENA. And you may notice that I am not going to bed with you.

RUDOLF. Elena! Will you tell me that never once during the years of your union with this great thinker, never once have you shut your eyes and assured yourself, "It's Rudolf Maximillian."

ELENA. Not in years have I thought of that.

RUDOLF. But there were times at first, weren't there? Many times?

ELENA. There may have been.

RUDOLF. I thought so—and they became less frequent as the years went by—not because you were learning to be happy with him, but because you were learning to be resigned. You see—I know something about your psychology, too. Now, come—we've had enough of debate. It's time for a little emotion. We'll see if we've forgotten what life tastes like.

ELENA (*indicating the door at the left.*) I'm going back in there.

RUDOLF. You are not! (*He seizes her wrist and pull her against him, then holds her tightly in his arms.*) You are now expected to shriek.

ACT II

ELENA. I shall not shriek.

RUDOLF. Forgive me. I had forgotten that you are not the shrieking kind. That was always one of your most engaging qualities, Elena. You invariably knew when you were beaten. (*He kisses her several times, on her eyes, ears, nose and throat. She offers no apparent resistance and no response.*) Ah, Elena, my only darling—it isn't easy for you to yield, is it? You keep on thinking of that wedding ring in my pocket. You're loyal to him, because you have the courage to be decent. You were always loyal, always brave. But with me, it isn't as it would be with anyone else. Can't you see that? I loved you first. And you loved me. You weren't lying when you said you loved me. You never knew how to lie. And I'm only asking you to love me again, for a little while, reminiscently, not as a rival of your husband, but as the echo of a voice that enchanted you when you were innocent and impressionable and young. You can't tell me that those things have changed. I can see that they haven't. You have not grown old. The warmth is still in you. You can still make me adore you, and I can still make you love me! (*He sits down on the couch, still holding her tightly as she stands before him.*) Why not admit it, Elena? Why maintain that formidable rigidity, as though you were a pure-minded schoolgirl in the clutches of an avid gorilla? Relax, my darling. Let yourself go. (*She has begun to laugh.*) Have I happened to say something witty? (*ELENA continues to laugh.*) There is something in the quality of that laughter which suggests that I'm wasting my time wooing you.

ELENA. You told me to let myself go!

Act II

RUDOLF. I did, but it was not intended as a pleasure. (He is seated on the couch. She is standing over him. Suddenly, she seizes his face and kisses him as ferociously as he had kissed her.) Great God, Elena, I didn't expect . . .

ELENA (passionately.) No, you didn't expect me to take your advice so quickly. (She slaps his face.) Did you? You thought I'd keep up the pretence of frigidity forever, didn't you? (She kisses him again. As she does so, he pulls her down on to the couch. She rolls over him.) Am I frozen now?

RUDOLF. No, there's been an unaccountable thaw. (She kisses him again.)

ELENA. Am I restraining myself now? Am I being subdued, repressed, coldly unresponsive? Am I? (She slaps him again.)

RUDOLF. No! But for God's sake, Elena—there is such a thing as going too far.

ELENA. No, there isn't. Let's open the doors.

RUDOLF. No.

ELENA. Yes! I want them to see that I haven't changed, that there are some things that can never change. (She goes to the doors, flings them open, and shouts "Come on—come on!" POFFY, GISELLA and the rest come in, laughing, shouting. BREDZI and JANSEI are with them, playing "The Merry Widow" waltz.)

RUDOLF (through the happy din.) Look at her! Look at her! She has been hitting me—hitting me with all the old enthusiasm! Show them how you did it, darling! (She slaps him again. He kisses her gratefully. Then he picks her up in his arms and waltzes her into the

ACT II

bedroom. . . . KOEPPKE *rushes after them and smirkingly closes the door. The others cheer lustily and wave their champagne glasses.*)

TALISZ. I give them both happiness!

SOPHIA. Happiness—and love!

POFFY. May the night last forever! (*He is standing on the sofa, singing, while BREDZI plays softly. The Countess crosses to the Count, who kisses her.*)

COUNTESS. This is the most enchanting moment of my life. (*HOETZLER bows to GISELLA, who curtseys, and they begin to waltz. SOPHIA goes to the couch.*)

SOPHIA (*transported.*) It is the same Vienna—the same exquisite Vienna. . . .

COUNT. Just as it always was! Nothing has changed.

COUNTESS. I don't care if I die to-morrow. I really don't care at all. (*LUCHER bustles in, terribly perturbed.*)

LUCHER (*to HOETZLER.*) Hush! Where has he gone? (*Waltzing with GISELLA, the GENERAL ignores LUCHER, who dashes to the left and shouts at KOEPPKE.*) Where is he?

KOEPPKE. We don't wish to be disturbed now.

TALISZ. What is she saying?

LUCHER (*thundering.*) Bredzi! Stop! (*The music stops. POFFY, still standing on the couch and singing, turns to LUCHER.*)

POFFY (*sublimely unmoved.*) Is there anything the matter?

LUCHER. Herr Povoromo! Get down off that brocade! (*POFFY descends. They all laugh.*) The police

Act II

are here! They've heard this racket and one of the bottles you threw hit somebody in the street. (*Gleeful cheers hail this gratifying news.*)

KOEPPEK (archly.) They'll hear no uproar from the arch-ducal chamber.

LUCHER. Where has he gone? And Frau Krug? What's he done with her?

SOPHIA. We haven't the faintest idea. (*They all laugh.*)

COUNT. Resume the music, Bredzi. (*The general, mildly intoxicated laughter is interrupted by the sound of sharp knocking from within the bedroom.*)

HOETZLER. What is that?

RUDOLF (offstage.) Elena! Elena! (*More pounding is heard. LUCHER starts up to the door. HOETZLER, SOPHIA, KOEPPEK and GISELLA stop her.*)

LUCHER. Have you all gone crazy? The police will get him!

SOPHIA. Ssh! (*RUDOLF bursts out of the room, rushes to the right. Through the opened door, on the bed, is ELENA'S white dress.*)

RUDOLF. Elena! Elena! (*He goes out at the right, then returns.*) Where is she? Why do you all stand there, frozen? Go after her. Find her. (*HOETZLER, SOPHIA, the COUNT, TALISZ and KOEPPEK go off babbling "We'll find her. We'll bring her back," etc.*) I never should have trusted her to go into that bathroom alone.

COUNTESS (frightened.) How did she get out? Did she jump out of the window?

ACT II

RUDOLF. No. She went through another door. I wouldn't have trusted her if it hadn't been for the affectionate way she hit me. Elena! (*He is still pacing about frantically, from door to door. SOPHIA comes in again.*)

SOPHIA. She's left the hotel!

COUNTESS. She ought to be ashamed of herself.

LUCHER. She's gone home!

RUDOLF. Home? And where is that? Where does she live?

LUCHER. You've got to stay here.

RUDOLF. Why?

LUCHER. The police.

POFFY. They're in the hotel now.

RUDOLF. Get my cap.

LUCHER. I tell you she's gone back to her husband.

RUDOLF. That psychoanalyst? So much the better. Get my cap! (*He propels LUCHER toward the bedroom.*) Now which one of you verminous objects is going to tell me where she lives?

GISELLA. I don't know where she lives.

RUDOLF (*to the COUNTESS.*) Do you know?

COUNTESS (*timorously.*) Poffy can tell you. Poffy knows.

RUDOLF (*to POFFY.*) You will escort me there.

POFFY. If you set foot out of this hotel you're insane.

RUDOLF. You're still threatening me with the police?

ACT II

POFFY. They'll recognize you, Your Highness. . . .

SOPHIA. Oh, we *beg* of Your Highness . . .

RUDOLF. Any member of the Vienna police force who lays a hand on me will find himself at the bottom of the canal. (*LUCHER has returned with the Tyrolean hat.*)

LUCHER. Here!

RUDOLF. No! My military cap!

LUCHER. That uniform is no longer worn in Vienna.

RUDOLF. I don't give ten thousand damns what's worn . . .

LUCHER (*screaming at him.*) They'll shoot you. They'll jump at the chance to finish you.

RUDOLF (*calmly.*) Very well. . . . Very well. (*He has put on the hat, and a cape which POFFY has brought for him.*)

LUCHER. She doesn't want you any more.

RUDOLF. Oh, yes, she does. She's leading me on. She wants the thrill of the chase. Well—she shall have it! (*He crosses to the right and picks up the brandy bottle from the table.*) And if the accommodations at her house are inadequate I'll bring her back here. So see to it that this party is still going on when I return, whether it's to-morrow—or the next day—or whenever. Come on, Poffy. (*He has gone out, followed by POFFY.*)

COUNTESS (*thrilled.*) He'll do it! He'll do it!

GISELLA. Nothing will stop him.

SOPHIA. He'll bring her back, and the party will go on forever!

Act II

LUCHER. You fools ! You fools ! Don't you see what will happen ? They'll catch him. They'll kill him. To-morrow there'll be another Habsburg burning in hell. (POFFY comes in quickly.)

POFFY. Frau Lucher !

LUCHER (*gasping*). Have they got him ?

POFFY. No. . . . His Imperial Highness presents his compliments and wishes you to advance him a few schillings for his taxi-fare. (LUCHER is muttering a series of unprintable imprecations as she digs into her capacious hand-bag.)

CURTAIN

ACT III

Again the living room in the KRUG home.

The time is directly after the end of Act II.

There are spots of light about the room, but the surrounding shadows are deep. In one of the areas of shadow ANTON is seated, listening to the radio, though not relaxed. He continually looks toward the window—toward the door. After a moment, he rises and crosses to the window, parts the curtains, and peers out.

ELENA comes in, breathless and agitated. RUDOLF's cape is about her, clutched tightly, masking the absence of her white dress. . . . She hurries past ANTON and turns off the radio.

ANTON (*turning from the window.*) Well, how was it?

ELENA. Just about as I expected.

ANTON. Amusing?

ELENA. No.

ANTON. No excitement?

ELENA. None.

ANTON. You didn't stay there very long.

ELENA. Didn't I? (*She is going toward her room.*)

ANTON (*gently.*) It was evidently a bit upsetting.

ELENA. It was nothing of the kind.

ACT III

ANTON. I don't like to question you, Elena, but I'm rather afraid that . . .

ELENA (*with uncharacteristic petulance.*) You like nothing better than to question me. (*She is at the back. He is still by the window at the right.*)

ANTON. You know that's not so.

ELENA. Oh—not usually. But to-night . . . why did you ask me to go? Why?

ANTON. I thought you might have a good time.

ELENA. You were wrong. You know, Anton, your prescriptions are not infallible. . . . But—let's not talk about it now. I'm tired. (*Old KRUG has come in from the upper left. He is in his bath-robe, night-shirt and slippers.*)

KRUG. Ah! So you're back. *I thought I heard you* come in. Well, how was the party? Did anything interesting happen? Tell us all about it.

ANTON. She's going to bed.

KRUG. Who all was there? Any famous people? (*ELENA has gone up to the door of her room.*) And what—where's your dress?

ELENA. Good night, father. Good night, Anton. (*She goes into her room.*)

KRUG. Hmm! Well, what do you make of it? (*ANTON crosses to the left, lights a cigarette, nervously. KRUG comes down slowly.*) Didn't you notice anything about the way she said good night? No kisses, nor sweet dreams, nor any affection. And that costume? She was wearing a dress when she left here, wasn't she? There's something the matter. Didn't you notice it?

Act III

ANTON (*sharply*). No!

KRUG. Well, if you didn't I *did*! And I don't set myself up as a great mind-reader, like you. . . . I could see that something happened there at Lucher's . . .

ANTON. She's tired, that's all.

KRUG. Yes—but *why* is she tired? That's what we ought to know. And what happened to her dress? That's what we ought to find out. You ought to ask a few questions about this . . . (*The insistent ringing of the night bell is heard.*)

ANTON. There's nothing to find out.

KRUG. There's the night bell.

ANTON. I can hear it.

KRUG. What do you suppose it is?

ANTON. I haven't the faintest idea. (*From the right can be heard peremptory pounding on the front door and loud hoots.* ANTON crosses to the right and goes out.)

KRUG. But listen. . . . That sounds like trouble . . .

RUDOLF (*offstage*). You needn't announce me . . .

KATHIE (*shrieking, offstage*). Oh! Herr Professor! It's a madman.

KRUG (*excited*). You'd better get out your pistol, Anton. It's another one of your patients gone insane.

KATHIE (*offstage*). A maniac! His keeper is with him but he won't listen. . . . He forced his way in. I couldn't stop him.

POFFY (*offstage*). I'm sorry, Herr Professor. If there had been any conceivable way of avoiding this . . .

ACT III

RUDOLF. A thousand pardons for the disturbance, but this dutiful handmaiden seemed to feel that I should be denied admittance. (*By now, RUDOLF has entered followed by POFFY, ANTON and KATHIE. RUDOLF is still carrying the bottle of brandy, as a weapon. He addresses KRUG.*) Are you the doctor?

KRUG. Yes! No!

RUDOLF. No?

KRUG. No! He is. (*He points to ANTON. RUDOLF turns and confronts the husband of ELENA.*) And I am his father . . .

RUDOLF. Ah! So you are the Herr Professor Doctor! I am frankly surprised. My imagination had adorned you with a gray beard, a long one. (*He bows.*) How do you do?

ANTON. Who are you?

RUDOLF. Eh? You are asking me who . . .?

KRUG. I can tell you who he is . . .

RUDOLF. He doesn't know who I am, Poffy. Come—step up! Present me.

POFFY. Professor Krug—this is the former Archduke Rudolf Maximillian.

RUDOLF. The former! One would think I had already joined my ancestors in their eternal empire.

KRUG. Oh! No!

RUDOLF. However, my dear doctor, you will readily observe that such is not the case. I am here, in your charming home, and I wish to see your wife.

Acr III

ANTON. My wife has gone to bed.

RUDOLF. She will wish to be aroused. (ANTON regards RUDOLF for a moment, then crosses in front of him and addresses KRUG.)

ANTON. Go to bed, father.

KRUG. Me?

ANTON (motioning him off.) Yes! Do as you're told. *In a state of extreme disgruntlement, old KRUG turns and ambles slowly up toward the steps. RUDOLF removes his hat.*

RUDOLF (to POFFY.) And you're no longer needed, Poffy. Go back to Lucher's and see that they carry on.

POFFY. I beg of you to come with me.

RUDOLF. I may be detained a little longer than I had expected.

POFFY. I'll be at the hotel on call. (POFFY goes out at the right. KRUG is now at the door of ELENA'S room.)

KRUG (calling through the door.) Elena, the Archduke Rudolf Maximilian von Habsburg is calling on us and they're sending me to bed. (KRUG goes on out at the upper left. . . . ANTON confronts RUDOLF, who holds the brandy bottle at the alert. . . . After a moment, ANTON smiles and advances toward RUDOLF.)

ANTON. I—I wish I could tell you how glad I am to see you.

RUDOLF (startled.) You're glad—to see me?

ANTON. I should think you could imagine why. You've been something of a presence in my home, for

ACT III

a long time, ever since Elena and I were married. No an entirely agreeable presence, I might add. (*He laughs.* But one that we could never quite get rid of. At times you've stalked about this house as if you owned it.

RUDOLF (*pleased.*) I have ?

ANTON. I naturally resented it, a little. But now tha I have the chance to see you, and talk to you, I can fee much more friendly toward that presence.

RUDOLF (*bewildered.*) Well ! I've known husband in my time—but you're the first one who ever grants me a kind word. . . . (*He steps forward. They bow an shake hands.*) I'm glad to see you, too, Herr Professor. Your vast reputation has not done you justice.

ANTON. A remarkably graceful compliment !

RUDOLF. Of course, I've known you through your books. Oh, yes ! I've studied them, carefully.

ANTON. All eight volumes ?

RUDOLF. You don't believe me, do you ? Very well—cross-examine me !

ANTON. No, no. I don't like cross-examination I'm only too eager to take your word for it.

RUDOLF. It's very fortunate that you are. Otherwise I should have been proved a liar. (*He puts his hand affectionately on ANTON's shoulder. They both laugh. . .* ELENA comes in, now wearing a *négligée*.) But I'm going to read them. I know now that they're good. (*He sees ELENA.*) Elena, we're friends !

(ELENA on the landing, looks from RUDOLF to ANTON.)

ELENA. Are you ?

Act III

ANTON. Of course we are. We see eye to eye on the most important subject.

RUDOLF. As a matter of fact, we're an incredibly happy combination. Your husband represents the sublimity of the intellectual, and I the quintessence of the emotional. You know—between us, just about there *—(he points to a spot on the carpet)—*there ought to be found the perfect man! (ANTON laughs. ELENA comes down, goes over to the left, beside ANTON.)

ANTON. Please go on talking.

RUDOLF. Gladly! I have a great deal of interest to say. (He sits down in a chair in the centre.)

ELENA. I hope you'll cut it short, Rudolf. Not that I'm unmindful of the great distinction conferred on our house by your presence here—but I'm sleepy. We're sleepy.

RUDOLF. I am still confident of my ability to keep you awake. But my words are not for you, my darling. They are for our mutual friend, your husband.

ANTON. I am anxious to hear them.

RUDOLF. I'm sure you are. And I'm equally sure that you'll be sympathetic. You're a brilliant psychologist—but more than that, you're a Viennese. You will know what I mean. . . . (ANTON bows.) But here—I seem to be the only one who's seated. Won't you please sit down?

ANTON. No—if you don't mind. . . (ELENA sits down on the edge of the couch.)

RUDOLF (*settling back in the chair.*) No, I don't mind. . . . Well—to begin at the beginning—always a

ACT III

suitable starting point: Herr Professor—I have been making advances to your wife. I am here now to continue them until the desired objective has been reached. Am I making myself clear?

ANTON. Perfectly clear.

ELENA. So far.

RUDOLF. Good! You are obviously a man of superior perception. You will not fail to see the validity of my claim. Fifteen years ago I became intimate with Elena. And when I say that I became intimate with her, I hope you will understand that I . . .

ANTON. I am familiar with the preface. You may skip it.

RUDOLF. No, no. I decline to do so. Indeed, I wish to dwell on it. She was then a maiden, exquisitely frail, standing hesitantly upon the threshold of infinite potentiality, if you will forgive my eloquence. Ah—she was lovely, Herr Professor. You would have adored her.

ANTON. I'm sure of it.

RUDOLF. As for myself, I was then, as now, a rank idealist—and when I first looked upon her, and felt the touch of her hand and saw the virginal invitation that was in her eyes, I vowed to myself, "This is the ultimate!" So I made her my mistress. For four beautiful years, I was devotedly . . .

ELENA. It was hardly more than two.

RUDOLF. Don't interrupt!

ELENA. Don't exaggerate!

ACT III

RUDOLF (*rising, enraged.*) If I'm to be interrupted
...!

ELENA. Don't exaggerate!

RUDOLF. I do so only because of a desire to flatter you. (*He turns apologetically to ANTON.*) Permit me to continue: our idyllic romance was terminated by the revolution. Austria was compelled to give up most of her treasured provinces and possessions, including my family. (*He sits down again.*) We were at Lucher's together when the summons came. I promised her I'd return immediately—but I didn't return. I never even had a chance to say good-bye to her. (*He has said this almost to himself.* *He turns now to ANTON.*) We were denied the privilege of parting as most lovers do, with the customary romantic heroism—hypocritical self-sacrifice. We were wrenched apart. (*He indicates the arbitrary separation with a gesture of his clenched fists.*) Surely, Herr Doctor, *you* can see the significance of that wrench.

ANTON. I've seen a great deal of it.

RUDOLF (*resuming.*) The pretence of adjustment had to be made. In my exile I concluded that I should never see my darling again, and I made every effort to reconcile myself to that dismal realization. The effort was not completely successful. For ten years I have felt the lack of her. So I decided to return to Vienna, and have one more look at her, and let my youthful illusions be shattered once and for all.

ANTON. That was a highly intelligent decision—wasn't it, Elena?

ELENA. I'm not quite certain.

ACT III

RUDOLF. Oh, it was, in theory. For I assumed that she would have become a commonplace, obese, bourgeois housewife.

ANTON. She has resisted the influences surrounding her.

RUDOLF. She has, indeed, and I've been grievously disappointed. I find that my acute want of her was no illusion. It remains a fact. (*He rises.*) A fact! (*He crosses and stands behind the couch.*) Which we all must face.

ELENA. Yes, Anton.

RUDOLF. Perhaps you don't believe that it is a fact. Elena didn't at first. I told her something this evening —something that I'd have confessed to no other woman. I told her that all the enjoyment I've had has been vicarious. I, too, have been conscious of a presence. Elena has been in attendance at all the sordid little romances I have ever known. (*Turning to ELENA.*) Oh, my dear, you'd be horrified if you knew how many fantastic shapes you have assumed. (*To ANTON.*) That sounds a bit disgusting, doesn't it?

ANTON. Nothing is disgusting that is said with such artless sincerity.

RUDOLF (*to ELENA.*) He's charming—charming! (*To ANTON.*) I *knew* you were qualified to deal with this situation, Herr Doctor. You see, Elena told me: you've written a whole book about me.

ANTON. What?

ELENA. I told him nothing of the kind.

Act III

RUDOLF. You did. You distinctly said he'd analyzed me . . .

ELENA (*cutting in.*) I did not. I said he'd written about that much, explaining your type. (*She indicates about two inches between her thumb and forefinger.*)

RUDOLF (*to ANTON.*) Evidently you can say volumes in a few words. Ah, Herr Doctor—it's enlightening to confront anyone like you, who can view things impersonally, and with none of the usual moralistic indignation. You're a scientist—thank God—and I beg of you to consider me as your patient. Analyze me. Subject me to the treatment that you know I need.

ANTON. I'm afraid that's impossible, my friend.

ELENA (*to RUDOLF.*) That's absurd. It takes a long time to complete a treatment.

RUDOLF. So much the better. I don't mind remaining in Vienna indefinitely. But now is the time to begin, Herr Doctor. I want some professional advice.

ANTON. I can't give it.

RUDOLF. But I insist that you can.

ELENA. It's not his custom to give advice.

RUDOLF. Nonsense—he's a doctor—a distinguished one.

ELENA. By a process of suggestion, he compels the patient to advise himself.

RUDOLF (*to ANTON.*) Very well, then—suggest something.

ANTON. No. You have ideas of your own.

RUDOLF. A bewilderingly wide variety.

ACT III

ANTON. I don't doubt it. But it is useless for me to try to consider this in the light of my own experience; because I have never confronted this problem in just this way before.

RUDOLF. Why, with Elena for a wife I should think that this sort of thing would be coming up all the time.

ANTON. I agree one would naturally think so. (*ANTON is beginning to betray evidences of impatience which might easily develop into violent wrath.*)

ELENA. But one would be wrong.

RUDOLF. Well, I'm glad.

ANTON. I'm only a psychiatrist. Your case requires the specialized services of a neuro-pathologist. There is a very good one in Munich.

RUDOLF. Munich? But that's a long way off—and the night is slipping through our fingers.

ANTON. That's the only advice I can give you, Herr von Habsburg. There's nothing I can do to help you.

RUDOLF (*appalled.*) Herr von Habsburg! So that's my name? Herr von Habsburg! Oh—I'm not protesting. It is my name! It would have been patronizing to call me anything else. Forgive me for interrupting. . . . (*During the foregoing speech he has crossed to the left, close to ANTON, as though, for a moment, he had considered a demonstration of his resentment of the humiliating "Herr."* . . . He now sits down, slumping, on a chair that is between ANTON, who is standing before the fireplace, and ELENA, on the couch. . . . It should be noted that through this dialogue ELENA is watching both of them with entranced interest, alarmed expectancy and mounting excitement. . . . With apparent weariness

ACT III

ness, RUDOLF *continues* :) You were saying something about a doctor in Munich.

ANTON. Yes. I'll give you a letter to him, and I urge that you go and consult him at once.

RUDOLF (*with a flash of anger.*) But I don't want to go to Munich ! I want this problem to be settled now !

ANTON. I'm not a witch doctor. I can't straighten out a mass of glandular complications with a wave of the hand.

RUDOLF (*surprised but amused.*) Oh, but I'm not complicated—even though I do like to represent myself as an enigma. (*To ELENA.*) You don't mind my talking about myself?

ELENA. Not at all. We're used to it.

RUDOLF. It's a fascinating subject. . . . You must realize, Herr Doctor, that for all my talk, I'm simply a man who lives on sensations. They're meat and drink and breath of life to me. At the moment, I'm desperately in need of nourishment—nourishment for my self-esteem. My ego is like the belly of a starving man—it's bloated but empty.

ANTON. And you imagine that I can furnish the necessary nourishment?

RUDOLF. If you can't—no one else can.

ANTON. If this could be dealt with in a rational manner, it would be simple. I'd tell you to look at her to your heart's content—fill your imagination with her. (RUDOLF turns and stares at ELENA and continues to do so while ANTON snaps out the following :) And then see for

ACT III

yourself that for you she has no substance ; she's a dream that you've explained, and disposed of, and that you can never recapture. . . . But it isn't so simple as all that. (Slowly RUDOLF turns away from ELENA, rises, confronts ANTON.)

RUDOLF. You're right, my friend. It isn't so simple I must do more than just look. (ANTON walks away, toward the right.)

ELENA. Well, Anton—what have you to say to that ?

ANTON (irritably.) There's nothing for me to say. I don't want to have anything to say. (There is a pregnant pause.)

RUDOLF. I know—it's a damned awkward situation. And it wouldn't have arisen if it hadn't been for your decency. When I came in here I was ready to fight, and either be dragged out myself, or take Elena with me. But—you were so kind. You were so friendly. You showed me that this dispute should be settled by reason as opposed to force.

ANTON. I find that this dispute has become essentially unreasonable.

RUDOLF. It has not! My impulses are entirely natural.

ANTON. And so are my objections to your impulses.

RUDOLF. Oh! So you do object.

ANTON. Yes! I do! (His attitude is now one of undisguised belligerence.)

RUDOLF. You're not friendly with me any more. Why? Do you imagine that I want to take her away from

ACT III

you for good and all? I can reassure you on that point. I am not attempting to shatter your home. I am asking for only a moment, a fragment of revival. That will give me enough to live on for another ten years—by which time I'll hardly be a serious menace to you or to anyone. Now—surely—you can have no objection to that?

ANTON. You're forcing me into the hellishly uncomfortable position of a jealous husband.

RUDOLF. If you will permit me to say so, you assumed that position voluntarily when you married her.

ANTON. Yes, yes! I know that!

RUDOLF. You admitted the presence that is in your house, and now that the presence has materialized, are you afraid to face it?

ELENA. No! Anton! You won't let him say that.

RUDOLF. No! No! I don't believe it! You're a man of exalted intellect. You know that jealousy is merely a manifestation of fear, and you have banished fear as completely as you have banished the odious Habsburgs. Isn't that so?

ANTON. We've expelled the Habsburgs from Austria but not all of us have expelled the Habsburgs from ourselves. . . . Now, I want you to leave.

RUDOLF. What?

ANTON. I'm asking you to go.

RUDOLF. Taking Elena with me?

ANTON. No.

RUDOLF. Even though she might want to go?

ACT III

ANTON. Have you bothered to consult her as to that? (*ELENA rises and crosses to the fire-place.*)

ELENA. Oh, leave me out of this. I'm only the guerdon in this conflict. You will have to dispose of me between yourselves.

ANTON. Get out!

RUDOLF. Oh—I'm disappointed in you, Herr Doctor. I thought you were one who had conquered all the baser emotions. But now I see that you *are* just a husband—no better than the rest of them.

ANTON. Unless you go of your own accord, I shall attempt to put you out—and I believe I shall succeed.

RUDOLF. I'm sure you can. But not without making a ridiculous spectacle of yourself.

ANTON (*taking off his glasses.*) Then I shall not delay the process. (*He now starts to take off his coat. Observing this, RUDOLF starts to take off his coat, turning to ELENA as he does so.*)

RUDOLF. There, Elena! I have exposed him before your eyes. This colossus of the intellect, this triumph of civilization, is behaving like a vindictive ape.

ANTON. Get out!

RUDOLF (*going up and putting his coat on the balcony rail.*) I have to warn you that I'm not going to fight fair.

ANTON. You'd better not watch this, Elena.

ELENA. Nothing could induce me to leave now! (*She sits down on the bench before the fire-place.*) I've just realized that I've been waiting for this moment for years.

ACT III

RUDOLF. That's right. Stay where you are. When I've had enough I'll call to you and you can drag him off me. (He picks up a small, modernistic metal statue from the book-case and brandishes it.) Come on, Herr Professor. It's for you to begin the brawl. . . .

ELENA. Put that down! (RUDOLF examines the statue.)

RUDOLF. Do you like that?

ELENA. Put it down! (Reluctantly he obeys.)

RUDOLF (to ANTON.) I'm now unarmed. I'm a competent swordsman but I'm hopelessly inept with my fists. I'm forced to the indignity of treating with you. I'll make you an offer.

ANTON. Make it quickly.

RUDOLF. A very handsome one . . .

ANTON. Make it quickly!

RUDOLF (with convincing fervour.) If you'll permit your intelligence to triumph over your mediæval scruples, and grant me this negligible favour, then I shall give to you in return my one possession—namely, this carcase that I wear about my immortal soul, these priceless pounds of flesh. To-morrow I shall go forth upon the Ringstrasse. I shall kick and insult policemen. My identity will become known. I shall be beaten to earth and shot, and I shall die gloriously in the gutter, my head pillow'd on a pile of excrement. But before I take this suicidal action, I shall sign documents bequeathing my remains, unconditionally, to the eminent Professor Doctor . . . what's the name?

Act III

ELENA. Krug.

RUDOLF. Krug! All that is left of me will be yours. You will appreciate my value to science. You may lay me out on your operating table, you may probe, dissect me, discover just what it is about me that has made me what I am, the quality that dominated most of Europe for six hundred years. You will be able to say to your students: "Here, gentlemen—this revolting object that I hold before you is the heart of a Habsburg!" (*There is a prolonged pause.*) No? You reject my offer? You insist on being primitive? Very well, then! Come on, Herr Doctor— (*He steps back and achieves a pose.*) I'm waiting for that bull-like rush.

ANTON. You are succeeding in your object.

RUDOLF. I—succeeding?

ANTON. You are making a fool of me. I should have heeded your warning that you wouldn't fight fair. There are a thousand excellent reasons why I should hit you and I know all those reasons. But confronting you this way, in the presence of my wife, whom I wish above all others to impress, I can't do it. I could finish the fight, but I can't start it.

ELENA. No, Anton, you're wrong. You couldn't finish it. I am the only one who could do that. I should have known it there at Lucher's. (*The night bell rings.*) I shouldn't have tried to escape. That's the mistake I've always . . . (*The bell rings again.*) Who is that?

RUDOLF. Don't tell me that the doctor is being summoned to a patient! (*The bell rings again.*)

ELENA. Shall I go? (*She crosses to the right.*)

ACT III.

ANTON. No—Kathie is awake. (*Old KRUG comes in.*)

KRUG. I heard the bell! I thought it might be something important.

RUDOLF. Let us hope it is not a matter of life and death. (*KATHIE comes in at the right.*)

KATHIE. Herr Professor Doctor! (*POFFY rushes in.*)

POFFY. Herr Professor Doctor, my deepest apologies for bursting in in this manner but . . .

ANTON. What is it?

POFFY. It's the police.

KRUG. The police!

ANTON. What do they want?

POFFY. His Imperial Highness was seen tearing down the Kartnerstrasse in a taxi . . .

(*Old KRUG whistles.*)

ELENA. They want him! They've found out about him!

RUDOLF. By all means let them have me. It's an easy disposition of your problem, Herr Professor.

ELENA. No. You will have to hide. Go in there.

ANTON. What good will that do? The police will keep on till they find him.

RUDOLF. I shall not hide! I prefer to stand and face them.

ACT III

ELENA. No, you won't. Go in there. . . . Kathie—tell the police that Dr. Krug will see them in a moment.

KATHIE. Yes, ma'am. (*She goes.*)

POFFY (*to RUDOLF.*) You must hide! The whole force is out searching for you.

RUDOLF (*going up.*) This is the very depth of ignominy.

KRUG. In here, Your Imperial Highness.

ELENA. Here! (*She hands him his Tyrolean hat.*)

RUDOLF. I will not be arrested in this God-damned hat! (*He goes into the room at the back.*)

ELENA. Shut the door, father. (*KRUG does so—ELENA motions him to his bedroom. He pouts but goes out, upper left.*)

ANTON. We'll have to see them.

POFFY. I beg of you, Herr Professor, go down and send them away.

ANTON. Do you think that will stop them from going on with their search?

POFFY. But, surely, they will listen to you. Your position . . .

ANTON. They know perfectly well that there was every likelihood of his coming here. I might get them out of this house, but I can't prevent them from keeping a close watch on it.

POFFY. But you have the greatest influence with the authorities. You can speak to them, persuade them . . .

Act III

ANTON. To do what? To allow him to remain here as my guest?

POFFY. No—to permit him to leave Austria, quietly. If you will only say a word to Herr Wreed, the prefect. He's out at Schönbrunn. . . . And I can swear to you that the Archduke will abide by any arrangement you choose to make.

ANTON (*to ELENA.*) So I'm to go to Schönbrunn and make all the arrangements.

ELENA. Oh, yes, Anton. You must do everything you can to help him. . . .

POFFY. You will be performing an act of the greatest generosity!

ELENA. Yes, Anton. (*ANTON stares at ELENA for a moment, then turns to POFFY.*)

ANTON. Will you please wait for me downstairs?

POFFY. Yes, Herr Professor Doctor. (*He bows and goes. There is another pause.*)

ANTON. An act of great generosity! And let us hope of great wisdom.

ELENA. Have you any doubt of the wisdom, Anton?

ANTON. Yes, I have, but I must not admit it. (*He is making a gallant attempt to be ironic.*) You see, Elena—I am facing the test of my own relentless principles. You've heard what my students call me: "the messiah of a new faith." . . . Well—to-night I've heard the bitter injunction that is given to all messiahs: "Physician, heal thyself." It's not a comforting thought. . . .

Act III

However—I must go out to Schönbrunn and see Wrede. I must make the necessary arrangements. I shan't be back before morning.

ELENA. Oh !

ANTON. Yes ! (*He comes close to her.*) You saw the truth, Elena. You saw it, at last, when he goaded me into behaving like—like a vindictive ape. You are the only one who can settle it. If you can look at him, and laugh at him, and pity him, as you'd pity a deluded child ; if you can see him for what he is, and not for what your memory tells you that he was—then you're free. He can never hurt you, whatever he does, or whatever you do.

ELENA. Very well, Anton.

ANTON (*he stares at her for a moment.*) Good-bye, Elena . . . And tell him not to worry. . . . (*He turns and starts to go.*) Herr Wrede will be glad to do me a favour. His wife is one of my patients. (*He has gone out at the right.* . . . ELENA stands still for a moment, then turns and calls, "Rudolf ! Rudolf !") RUDOLF opens the door and peers out. ELENA crosses to the left.)

ELENA. They've gone. You can come out. (*RUDOLF emerges, still in his shirt sleeves, carrying his uniform coat. His tone during the subsequent scene is elaborately sardonic.*)

RUDOLF. Are you sure it's safe ?

ELENA. Perfectly.

RUDOLF. Where is your husband ?

ELENA. He has gone out.

Act III

RUDOLF. Where?

ELENA. To see the prefect of police.

RUDOLF. And what am I to do in the meanwhile—put on my coat and go?

ELENA. No. You can't. The police are down there.

RUDOLF. They were reluctant to take your husband's word?

ELENA. Yes—but you can rely on Anton. He has great influence with the officials. He'll see to it that you are allowed to leave Austria safely.

RUDOLF (*coming down.*) So I'm to rely on him, am I?

ELENA. There's no one else who could do as much for you.

RUDOLF. The soul of magnanimity, isn't he!

ELENA. Yes.

RUDOLF. And trustful, too!

ELENA. Yes.

RUDOLF. And sublimely confident of your strength.

ELENA. Yes!

RUDOLF. And contemptuous of me. (*She says nothing. He throws his coat down on the couch, and glowers at the door through which ANTON departed.*) As effective a bit of foul play as I have ever witnessed! He's tricked me into his debt—put me on my honour. He knows that I have that. It runs in my royal blood—honour and epilepsy. We deserved to be thrown out—not because we were tyrants, but because we were all at

ACT III

heart rotten sentimentalists. The doctor has discovered the essential weakness.

ELENA. I told you his method of cure. He influences the patient to advise himself.

RUDOLF. Yes—and what he has made me advise myself is not very gratifying to my vanity or stimulating to my lecherous impulses. God damn him ! He's devitalized me, emasculated me. (*He sits down on the end of the couch ; his fury and much of his bumptiousness have gone out of him.*) While I was in there, hiding, waiting for him to protect me from the law, I looked at my coat, and the obsolete medals, and the worn-out lining, and a great truth dawned on me. It came to me in a revelation that I am no longer an Archduke, nephew of an Emperor ; I am a taxi-driver, dressed up !

ELENA. And did your revelation also disclose to you what I am now ?

RUDOLF. Yes ! You're no longer a mistress—you're a wife—and consequently unprepossessing.

ELENA. Ah ! You have realized that at last !

RUDOLF. I have.

ELENA. And you know that I can face you, and laugh at you, and pity you, as I'd pity a deluded child !

RUDOLF. Do we need to enlarge on it ? If you mean to get satisfaction for all the indignities that I've lavished on you, you'll be up all night. . . . Go to bed and leave me alone. I'll promise to sit here and keep the faith.

ELENA (*with sudden tenderness.*) You'd better have some rest. You'll be travelling in the morning.

ACT III

RUDOLF. Your solicitude is touching. But please don't have me on your mind.

ELENA. The police may come back.

RUDOLF. And you want me to know that it would grieve you sorely to have me receive my just deserts. I knew it!

ELENA. You'd better go in there and lie down and try to get some sleep.

RUDOLF. As you wish. (*He rises, crosses to the window, starts to look out upon the Viennese scene, but turns away.*) I shall rest peacefully, soothed by the knowledge that even I have influential friends in Austria. . . . Good night. . . . And when the benevolent doctor returns, please try to express to him some measure of my gratitude. Assure him that, thanks to his generosity, I shall leave Vienna for ever, and return to my taxi. (*He has gone up to the landing at the back, ELENA picks up his coat from the couch.*)

ELENA. You've forgotten your coat, Rudolf.

RUDOLF. Oh, thank you.

ELENA (*looking at the coat.*) It needs mending. (*She goes up to the steps.*)

RUDOLF. Please don't bother. I'll never wear it again.

ELENA. You will, Rudolf. You'll always wear it, gallantly—even if the lining is a little torn. It's your coat. (*She hands him the coat.*)

RUDOLF. Yes! One of the meagre possessions of Herr von Habsburg! (*He puts the coat on the balustrade.*)

Act III

You're very sweet, Elena. I don't quite know why you should be, in view of the ridiculous trouble I've caused. But please remember that I'm grateful—and also sorry. (She takes his hand.)

ELENA. No, Rudolf—you must never be sorry.

RUDOLF. Good night, my dear. (He kisses her hand.) Good-bye. (He goes into the bedroom. . . . For some moments, she stands still. At length, she picks up his coat, looks at the worn lining and the tarnished medals, hanging limply. Then she turns, switches out the lights so that the stage is in darkness except for a faint glow from the hallway. She opens the door of her room. The light from within shines on her.)

ELENA. Rudolf . . .

RUDOLF (from offstage.) Yes? (She goes into the room and closes the door behind her.)

CURTAIN

The curtain is down a few seconds to indicate the passage of several hours. Its rise reveals morning, brilliantly sunny, warm and cheerful. KATHIE is completing the arranging of the breakfast table which is at the left of the couch. It is set for three.

Old KRUG shuffles in from the left, carrying the morning paper.

KRUG (disgusted.) Just as I thought! Not a word in here about what happened last night. One of the most exciting things that's happened in this city in years, and then they hush it up. (He sniffs and his expression changes.) Mm! Kidneys.

ACT III

KATHIE. You're not to touch them ! They are for the Herr Professor Doctor.

KRUG. I thought as much. . . . Oh—well . . . (KATHIE starts to go, KRUG follows her, talking.)

KRUG. Oh, Kathie ! (She pauses.) What did you think of our guest, eh ? Did you ever see any one like that before ?

KATHIE (scornfully.) No ! (She resumes her exit.)

KRUG. I never did, either—I mean, close to. How did they get rid of him ? What happened after I went to bed ? (He is following her out.)

KATHIE (from offstage.) I haven't the faintest idea what happened !

KRUG (from offstage.) Well—I'd surely like to know. But it's a sure thing no one's going to tell me. Didn't you hear anything ? (RUDOLF comes out of the room at the back, and deposits his cape and his hat on the balustrade. . . . KRUG, still mumbling, returns.) I've got to find out all these things for myself.

RUDOLF. Good morning. Good morning. Good morning ! Whoever you are, I bid you good morning, and I can assure you I do so with the most profound sincerity. (KRUG sees who it is, and is so startled he can only gape. RUDOLF goes to the window and looks out.) It has been years since I have seen one like it. You know, it's an extraordinary thing about Vienna ; in no other place on earth will you find a finer quality of mornings. They're ample, they're complete ! They have character. Look at this one ! It's a new day—and, don't forget, that's very different from saying "another day." You never

Act III

hear people in Vienna say "another day has dawned," do you? For that's precisely like saying "another Chinaman has been born," an exact reproduction of all the countless millions and millions of Chinamen that have been born and lived and died. . . . It's an appalling thought, isn't it? (*He crosses toward the breakfast table, by which old KRUG, utterly bewildered, is now standing.*) No, my dear friend—we Viennese are privileged beings. For us, each morning is an adventure, unprecedented and unforgettable. A new day! (*He inspects the array of breakfast.*) What have we here?

KRUG (*weakly.*) I thought Your Imperial Highness had gone.

RUDOLF. What led you to that misconception? (*He is looking at the various dishes.*)

KRUG. After the police had left, I heard the front door close again.

RUDOLF. That was the excellent Herr Professor, going forth to clear the atmosphere. Ah! Kidneys. (*He takes the dish and sits down.*)

KRUG. Those are for my son!

RUDOLF. He likes kidneys, does he? (*He has begun to eat them.*)

KRUG. He does—and no one is allowed to touch . . .

RUDOLF. Please sit down. (*KRUG sits across the table.*) You know, the more I hear about that gifted scientist, the more I know him to be a gentleman of discernment and taste. He and I obviously appreciate the same delicacies.

ACT III

KRUG. Where did you sleep last night?

RUDOLF. Now really, my friend—you're a man of the world, aren't you?

KRUG (*indignantly*). I am nothing of the kind.

RUDOLF. I envy you. It's a poor world. You do well to keep out of it. If you take my advice, you'll stay here, where you are, in this charming house, in this incomparable city, with a view of the horse-chestnuts; and leave investigation of the world to those who have no place else to go. (*ELENA comes in. She is radiant.*) Ah! Our lovely hostess!

KRUG. Look, Elena! Look at who is having breakfast with me!

ELENA. Good morning, father. Good morning, Rudolf. (*She waves toward the window.*) Gorgeous, isn't it?

RUDOLF. We've been discussing it, at some length.

KRUG. You should have heard him, Elena. I couldn't make out what he was talking about. (*ELENA has come down to the table and taken possession of the coffee pot.*)

ELENA. Will you have coffee, Rudolf?

RUDOLF. Oh—I'll have everything: coffee, with whipped cream, rolls, honey, jam, jelly. . . . (*To KRUG.*) By the way, did you ever know why it was that our bakers started making rolls in the shape of crescents? (*KRUG shakes his head.*) It was intended as an expression of our contempt for the Turks. (*He is holding up a crescent roll while he talks.*)

ACT III

KRUG. Was it really ! (*He take a bite of a roll, and munches it reflectively, as though appreciating for the first time its full flavour.*)

RUDOLF. Oh, I could tell you many similar facts of historical importance. For instance—about the Serbian pigs . . .

ELENA (*interrupting.*) I've forgotten whether you take sugar.

RUDOLF (*gazing at her.*) So have I. (*Old KRUG laughs heartily.*)

ELENA. Father ! What are you laughing at ?

KRUG. He said he'd forgotten if he takes sugar.

RUDOLF. I don't blame you for laughing ! I don't blame you a bit. It was a fatuous remark.

KRUG. What ?

RUDOLF. A very silly remark. As a matter of fact, I take three lumps. (*They all laugh at that.*)

ELENA (*to KRUG.*) He's a fool, isn't he ?

KRUG. I should say that he is ! Why, do you know what he said about the morning ? He said it was like a lot of Chinamen ! (*He laughs uproariously. So do ELENA and RUDOLF. . . . The merriment is interrupted when ANTON comes in, accompanied by POFFY.*)

ANTON. Good morning.

ELENA. Anton ! (*She rises and crosses to ANTON.*)

KRUG. (*pointing to RUDOLF.*) Look at this, Anton . . .

RUDOLF. Before any one else breaks the news, me to announce that I have devoured the kid-

Act III

ELENA. Kathie will cook some more. Sit down, Anton—and you too, Poffy.

ANTON. No, I've already had a huge breakfast at the Hotel Lucher. But I'm afraid this gentleman hasn't. He has been standing out in the street all night.

RUDOLF. Why in heaven's name have you been doing that?

POFFY. The police were still there, and I thought I might be needed.

RUDOLF. And you were ready to die for your Prince. Such gallantry must not pass unnoticed. (*He unpins a medal from his coat and tosses it to Poffy, who catches it.*)

KRUG (*wide-eyed.*) Did you see that!

RUDOLF. You say you've been at Lucher's?

ANTON. Yes.

RUDOLF. Is the party still going on?

ANTON. Oh Lord, yes. They all entertained me at breakfast.

ELENA. How are they now?

ANTON. They're getting a little sleepy.

RUDOLF (*to old KRUG.*) Then let's rush over and wake them up! (*KRUG starts up, hopefully.*)

ANTON. I'm afraid we can't. I mean, you and I.

RUDOLF. Oh!

ANTON. We have to start immediately for Passau, where you will be allowed to cross the frontier. There's a government car downstairs.

Act III

RUDOLF. I see.

ANTON. I hate to drag you away.

RUDOLF (*rising.*) But it's necessary. Of course it is. Do I have to wear that cape and that hat?

ELENA. Yes—help him, father. (*Rising, KRUG throws his napkin down.*)

KRUG. Oh, dear! Now he has to go!

ELENA. But why do you have to go with him Anton?

RUDOLF. I flatly refuse to hear of such a thing! I will not take you away from your duties, your home. Poffy will escort me.

POFFY. I should be delighted to.

ANTON. No. I have given my word that I myself will see you depart from Austria. The authorities wished me to explain that they will take extraordinary precautions to see that you do not return.

RUDOLF. I don't blame them. I don't blame them a bit. . . . Thank you. (*This to old KRUG, who has brought him his hat and cape.*)

ANTON (*to ELENA.*) I shan't be back much before evening. Will you tell Zenzi to cancel all my engagements for to-day?

ELENA. Yes, Anton. I'll tell her. And I'll send word to the university.

RUDOLF. A dutiful wife, Herr Professor. I commend her to you—and you to her. It is a remarkable union, and it will give me satisfaction to the end of my

Act III

days to think that perhaps I, in my small way, have contributed something to it.

ELENA. It's time to go, Rudolf.

RUDOLF. I know it is. But before I depart, Herr Professor, let me say that I call your roof tree blessed! For beneath it, a Habsburg has been entertained—royally entertained—and has been granted, into the bargain, a superb demonstration of applied psychology. . . . Good-bye, Elena. (*He kisses her hand.*) No wistful tears, please. (*He crosses to POFFY, who bows and kisses RUDOLF's hand.*) Good-bye, Poffy. If you sell that medal for a sou less than a thousand francs, I shall be insulted. (*RUDOLF slaps POFFY on the back and crosses to old KRUG, who is by the door at the right.*) Good-bye, my dear friend. Think of me in the mornings. (*He kisses old KRUG on both cheeks and goes out at the right. POFFY and KRUG go up to the window.*)

ANTON (*to ELENA.*) There'll be no trouble. . . .

ELENA. Anton—there's something I want to say. . . .

ANTON (*bastily.*) No, there isn't, Elena. You have nothing to say to me. I have only to look at you. (*He takes her hand.*) I must hurry. . . .

ELENA. Yes, Anton—but I wanted to say—when you get to the frontier, ask him to give you back my wedding ring.

ANTON. I shall. And I left a package for you in the hall. Frau Lucher gave it to me. It's your white dress. (*He kisses ELENA's hand and goes out.*)

ACT III

KRUG (*at the window.*) A government car—with the shades drawn! (ELENA goes over to the table and sits down, *wilfully indifferent to old KRUG's excited reports of what is happening in the street below.*)

ELENA. Sit down, Poffy, and have some breakfast. You must be famished.

POFFY (*crossing to the table.*) I rather imagine that I am. (POFFY sits down. ELENA looks at the empty dish.)

KRUG. They're just starting—and the policeman is saluting them!

ELENA. All the kidneys are gone. . . . Father! Ring the bell. I'll tell Kathie to cook some more.

KRUG. Enough for me, too? (*Pressing the bell button.*)

ELENA. Of course.

KRUG. Good! (*He is ambling over to the table.*)

ELENA (*pouring coffee.*) Cream?

POFFY. No, thanks, Elena. I've got out of the habit of cream.

ELENA. Oh, but this morning. . . . (*She puts in cream and hands him the cup.*)

KRUG. You know, Elena—I've never, in all my life, had so much fun!

ELENA. Neither have I. (*She smiles slowly at old KRUG, then sips her coffee.*)

CURTAIN